

Our Dwelling Place:

The Making of a Sense of Place in Semi-rural England

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Abstract

This thesis focuses on a place making process in semi-rural England. 'Place' in this thesis means personally meaningful environment. The thesis describes and analyses various efforts made by residents in two parishes in West Midlands to connect themselves with their immediate environment. Most of the agents appear in this thesis are in-migrants of various lengths of residency. Unlike those who were born and bred there, those who moved in later in their lives cannot claim the 'natural' relationship to the environment. Their relationship to the environment is not given by birth. They have to build up the relationship consciously. The thesis examines what elements are mobilised in the process and how.

The general ethnographic details of two sites are given in Part I. Part I also plays the role of the introductory section to the discussion to be developed in Part II. The highlighted points are different in two sites. In Dymock part, a history of the parish and people's activities generated around the history are described in detail. In Colwall part, on the other hand, a planning issue and a debate caused by a proposed housing development are followed in detail.

Part II is organised by a theme rather than a location. The first chapter in this part is dedicated to the issue of history and memory. How the elements of time and past is deployed in the process of place making is examined. More specifically, the chapter focuses on the passion for recording the history in the forms of document and performance. The second chapter examines a regulatory framework of space, or the space management system, in England and the way people negotiate with the system to form or maintain the ideal place. The chapter also considers a class element involved with the process. Throughout Part II, the desire of control and the sense of ownership are considered.

People in both Dymock and Colwall often mention that they live in the countryside, which has a special meaning for them. Living in the countryside forms the crucial part of their sense of place. In the final part, the thesis examines this heavily culturally value-laden space of English countryside. Part III describes the recent debate over the fox-hunting with dogs which reveals various sentiments that are not always accessible or acceptable for those who are described in previous Parts. This Part also examines the idea of stewardship of the countryside as a compromise to create a sense of shared ownership of the place.

Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis has been composed by myself and is the product of my own work.

Sign

Date 8 April 2004

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Acknowledgements

I remember very well the first day I arrived at Great Malvern station with heavy suitcases. It was one of the fine autumn days. The clear air, however, somewhat failed to give me up-lifting feeling but I had peculiar impression of hollowness instead. I did not know a single person down there. I did not have any contact to start the fieldwork either. I just popped in a local tourist information office to find a room in a bed and breakfast. I was full of anxieties and the Malvern area was a completely alien place for me. That was the start. However, one and a half years later on the day I left there, I found it very difficult to start the engine of my car. I could not believe the fact that I had to leave this place. The Malvern area had been turned into one of the most intimately meaningful places for me. I now have a great number of persons whom I can call 'friends' in the true sense of the word.

My debt to all the persons I have worked with in the Malvern Hills area is too much to express here properly. Their capacity to show their generosity, patience, and hospitality has been phenomenal. They showed their beautiful nature in an impressively subtle and graceful way not to embarrass me. I just hope this thesis will be received as a product of our friendship. Following the standard ethnographic practice, I used pseudonyms for most of whom appear in this thesis. So, I name no name here but express profound thankfulness for them all.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Our / Dwelling / Place

This thesis is about how persons I met in semi-rural England created their own senses of place and what kind of elements were mobilised in such a process. It is an ethnography of a contemporary process of place-making. The title *Our Dwelling Place*, which I took from Robert Frost's poem *The Sound of Trees*¹, may require a little explanation since it contains two potentially problematic terms.

The first one is the collective noun. The persons I mainly focus on in this thesis are those who moved later in life by their own choice into localities where I conducted fieldwork. In most cases they have few preceding personal connections to the localities in terms of kinship and memory. Few of them work on the land, which means they are not tied to the environment as a means of production or as the economic basis of their lives. The localities are 'new places' for them, but they are not 'essential' parts of their lives in economic terms. Although the reasons they chose the area were varied, their settlement in the locality is ultimately rather contingent. This experience of moving into a locality which has little personal connection or a basis in economic necessity has become rather a standard practice, at least for those who live in developed countries, and especially so for the middle-class population to which I myself belong. The first-person collective noun in the title modestly implies this almost universally shared condition of migration among the middle-class. In this process we have to make our own sense of being in a place, if we still want to have such a thing, which inevitably takes quite different forms from conventional manners

¹ As I shall describe in Chapter 2, the American poet Frost lived in one of the parishes in which I did my research. The phrase 'our dwelling place' was used simply to indicate a cottage he rented there without any significance, and the poem itself has little to do with the theme of this thesis. Nevertheless, I chose it as the title of my thesis since I feel that it expresses very well the intimate attachment to one's living space which I want to write about. And the fact that the phrase was uttered by an in-migrant is another reason I used this phrase. However, unlike the poet's usage, 'dwelling place' here does not mean a house but a place where persons settle and to which they have a strong emotional attachment.

applied by a relatively sedentary population.

The region in which I carried out my fieldwork is predominantly a white middle-class area which is in fact often described as a site of 'middle England', and persons I shall describe are 'typical' residents in such an area². The form of place-making I shall examine here is that made by a rather affluent group of English society whose migration is the result of a positive choice they made, one which is naturally radically different from a choice made by an impoverished or persecuted population who are forced to move. In this sense, the persons who are included in the collective noun are rather limited. More precisely, this thesis provides and examines only one example of the place-making process out of many other cases which have taken place in a much wider context of the modern condition of displacement (see Gupta and Ferguson 1997, Bender 2001).

The other term requiring explanation is 'dwelling'. Although the word in Frost's poem was used merely to suggest a house, it inevitably reminds us of the phenomenological consideration of space presented by Heidegger (1978). In his not-so-self-evident short lecture note, Heidegger explored the way humans construct a lived relationship with their environment or the way they construct their sense of being-in-the-world. He began with an etymological consideration of two German words, *wohnen* (to dwell) and *bauen* (to build), to see the reason why these two words or notions were so closely related. *Wohnen* originally meant 'to remain' or 'to stay' in a place, and later another meaning of 'to be at peace' evolved. *Bauen*, on the other hand, originally meant 'to dwell' in addition to meaning two modes of building: 'to cultivate' and 'to construct'. After establishing the connection between the two notions, he then presented a notion of the fourfold (*das Geviert*) which consists of the four mutually connected elements of earth, sky, divinities and mortals. Heidegger stressed that the four elements that make up the fourfold, which seems to represent the world, are in fact one and inseparable. He continued that the mortals, or

² My field site is on the borders of Worcestershire, Herefordshire and Gloucestershire, which is roughly located in the geographical centre of England. This area, especially Worcestershire, is also often cited as a site of 'middle England' which refers to the white, middle-class and conservative population. At the 1997 general election, the media used the term 'Worcester woman' as shorthand for a female voter of such a section of the population, which was supposed to be the main contributory factor to Labour's landslide victory. Worcestershire is also widely assumed as to be the location of

humans, are connected to the other elements, or the environments, by dwelling, by which he seems to mean that humans can only be connected to their environment in a meaningful way through the act of 'building', which enables them to have a sense of peace. By building 'things', humans create a site to gather the elements. He called such a site a 'location', and claimed that it was only when the location was produced that humans could connect themselves to space in any meaningful way.

This idea of 'dwelling' presented by Heidegger's rather pedantic and somewhat enigmatic paper was revived in the 1980s by cultural geographers who tried to re-examine humans' relationship with the environment from a phenomenological point of view (eg Seamon and Mugerauer 1985), which was followed by anthropologists (eg Jackson 1995, Basso 1996, Ingold 1993, 1995, 2000) and others (eg Casey 1993, 1996, 1997). They creatively interpreted Heidegger's original text and made it useful to understand the human experience of space and place. The notion of dwelling was interpreted as a process by which humans construct a personally meaningful world where they feel at home. Moreover, the act of building highlighted by Heidegger as a principal act to create such a world was given much broader sense than its original literal meaning of the construction of objects. Building was interpreted as an act of humans' active and conscious engagement with their surrounding environment, which did not have to involve physical alterations. In other words, the notion of dwelling is re-shaped here as a conscious effort made by an agent to relate him/herself with his/her surroundings in a meaningful and intimate way³. In this thesis, which is written as an investigation of persons' efforts to relate to their new environment, the term 'dwelling' carries this re-interpretation of Heidegger's notion as its connotation.

1.2. Place in Anthropology

Two out of the three words of the title have now been explained. The third one, 'place', requires much closer attention since 'place' is the key notion of this thesis.

Ambridge, an imaginary village in the beloved, longest-running BBC radio soap, *The Archers*.

³ Ingold's application of the notion is a more literal interpretation of Heidegger's original text.

The notion of place has drawn considerable attention in anthropology since the mid-1990s. I shall briefly review the relevant studies on this notion and in doing so I shall provide a chart to locate this thesis in current anthropological thinking.

1.2.1. Inspirational origins

Recently resurgent anthropological interests in the notion of place and space derived originally from the works of cultural geographers (Rodman 1992: 640, Feld and Basso 1996: 3). There were mainly three schools among geographers who brought the notion of place back into the central stage of intellectual investigation: those who tried to apply a phenomenological approach towards the understanding of the actual human experience of space (eg Relf 1976, Tuan 1977, Buttner and Seamon 1980, Lowenthal 1985, Seamon and Mugerauer 1985), those who were concerned with the spatial distribution of power (eg Agnew and Duncan 1989, Soja 1989, 1996, Keith and Pile 1993), and those who were especially interested in the pictorial representation of space (eg Cosgrove 1984, Cosgrove and Daniels 1988). Needless to say the intellectual origins of these schools are found in continental European philosophical thinking.

The first group got their inspiration mainly from Heidegger⁴. Their concern was to see the nature of 'being-in-the-world' which had been exhaustively considered by the philosopher (1962). They tried to find out the ways in which humans create and maintain relationships with their surroundings in everyday situations. One of the pioneer works of this group advocated the importance of paying attention to our psychological relationships with the everyday environment which form the foundation of human identity (Relf 1976). Because of this attention on human consciousness to perceive the environment and also on the meanings which humans project onto that environment, it became crucial for this group to distinguish the notion of 'place' from the notion of 'space'. 'Place' signifies an organised world of meanings which is constructed by human actions and imagination, while 'space'

⁴ Merleau-Ponty, through *The Phenomenology of Perception* and *The Structure of Behaviour*, also had a strong influence, especially on those who were interested more in a 'scientific' approach to the investigation of the relationship between humans and their environment (see Tuan 1971).

indicates the physical setting of an unarticulated, chaotic and fluid environment in which such a world of meanings is created (Tuan 1977)⁵. On this basis, the relationship between a person, or a group, and a particular location was highlighted in particular to see its importance in the process of personal or collective identity-building. In this context, and under the strong influence of the notion of 'dwelling', the idea of 'home' and the sense of belongingness to it were given special attention. Furthermore, this idea of 'home' was closely related to the idea of rootedness. However, the emphasis placed on the notion of 'rootedness' unwittingly gave a privileged position to a particular relationship between a person, or a group, and a location; it substantialised and essentialised that relationship. The same effect was also created by another notion highlighted by this group, that is, 'authenticity'. This is also Heidegger's influence. Heidegger himself stressed that the relationship between authenticity and inauthenticity was not hierarchical but that they were simply different modes of Being (1962: 68). In other words, he stressed that 'authenticity' and 'inauthenticity' could not be paraphrased by 'genuine' and 'false'. In the studies of this group of geographers the privilege was given to the 'authentic relationship' with surroundings which should be formed unconsciously or from

⁵ A similar idea was expressed by de Certeau (1984: 117-18). He defines place as the order in which every element is positioned at its 'proper' section without conflicting with other elements. Space, on the other hand, is understood as 'polyvalent unity of conflictual programs of contractual proximities'. In other words, space consists of contested and mobile elements. He pays more attention to space than place.

What Tuan did not much consider were the politics of place-making, from which de Certeau started his consideration (ibid: 91-130). Place-making does not take place in the vacuum of power relations. Rather, it is strongly influenced by existing politico-economic conditions. Place is not only the product of human creativity but is also likely to be the product which reflects and reinforces the interests of specific groups. In *The Practice of Everyday Life*, de Certeau used the notion of space as a powerful tool to deconstruct the notion of place which he seemed to regard as an ideological control apparatus. He pointed out that a place is ruled by the law of the 'proper'. However, this law is not proper for everybody but for specific groups of people, and as the nature of a law, it restricts people's possibilities and functions to maintain and reinforce the status quo. De Certeau stated that 'space is a practised place', by which, I assume, he focused on individuals' activities to construct and exploit the given place in which they live in their own ways. Put another way, de Certeau's notion of space can be regarded as personal place which is very flexible and which also varies from individual to individual, presented as opposed to the Place (with a capital P) that has been always already given to people. This Place with a capital P is the official, agreed and comprehensible version of the representation of an environment, which is not normally constructed by individuals living there but endowed to them. Relf also made a similar distinction between 'perceptual space' and 'existential space' when he raised six types of space, which should rather be called places (1976: 9-22). Perceptual space is a space constructed by individuals' action and imagination, which is important for their personal identities, whereas existential space is a space where individuals are integrated into the existing social and

rootedness, whereas the relationship constructed through conscious effort was regarded as 'superficial' or 'inauthentic'.

The second group's philosophical roots can be traced to French Marxist thinkers, especially Foucault and Lefebvre. Although Foucault is usually known for his consideration of history, his works also show his concern for the spatial distribution of power. The famous panopticon system in his study of prison and the location of asylums in his study of madness are good examples (cf Philo 2000). He did not explicitly or exhaustively pursue this construction of spatial orders, but on one occasion outlined his concern (1986). In this article he stressed the heterogeneity of the spatial organisation of the world and showed his strong interest in spaces of a particular nature. He was interested in spaces which problematise or subvert the dominant spatial order which we take for granted. He stated that there were two types of 'other' such spaces, namely utopias and heterotopias. Utopias are presented as unreal spaces of images which are created by turning real spaces upside down. He claimed that heterotopias were real but existed 'outside' of all the other spaces, which emerged at a time of crisis, or existed to locate, or segregate, 'deviation' of society. What he tried to reveal by highlighting these spaces was the spatially distributed relationship of powers. He regarded space as something socially, culturally and politically constructed to distribute powers. This constructionist view of space was shared by Lefebvre, who advocated the science of space (1991).

Lefebvre lamented the modern separation of the understanding of space between the physical one studied by physicists and mathematicians and the epistemological one pursued by philosophers. He claimed that this division missed out actual human lived experience of space. He wanted to create the science of space as a unitary theory which deals with physical, mental and social spaces. In this project Lefebvre highlighted the notion of 'production' as the key concept to create a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon of space: space is not there to be utilised but is produced by humans for particular purposes. His thesis was formed within the framework of the orthodox Marxist theory and it was written according to these terms. Lefebvre regarded the dominant 'mode of production' of a given society,

cultural entities.

which was formed by the relationship between 'the forces of production' (ie nature, labour, the organisation of labour, technology, knowledge, means of transportation etc.) and 'the relations of production' (ie relations over ownership of a means of production), as one which produces its own spatial arrangement. Thus, he particularly focused on the social space which was claimed to be produced by a society, or, to be more precise, the dominant mode of production of the society. He regarded that such a space functions as a means of control and domination; especially in the case of a capitalist society on which he focused, the social space is produced as a hegemonic order for the bourgeoisie. However, he continued, this function of control and the fact that social space is social product were concealed by the double illusion of transparency and natural simplicity attached to the general understanding of space, ie space is generally regarded as nature which can be directly observed without any obstacle rather than as an artificial construction which contains hidden intentions. Therefore, Lefebvre set the aim of this science to disclose the political use of knowledge to produce such a space.

For that purpose, or to reveal the dynamic process of the production of social space, he categorised human spatial experiences into three modes, that is, 'spatial practice' (the perceived space), 'representations of space' (the conceived space) and 'spaces of representation' (the lived space) (Lefebvre 1991: 33, 38-46, Soja 1996: 65-8). Although the names of modes are not self-evident or may not be very appropriate, what he wanted to highlight is clear enough. 'Spatial practice' consists of our physical experiences of the environment, especially those formed through the routine of everyday life. 'Representations of space' are the dominant spaces of the society, which means the dominant images and usage of space that are devised and imposed by those in power, or more specifically, by experts such as scientists, planners and technocrats. Put another way, representations of space are rationally controlled spaces ruled by order. 'Spaces of representations', on the other hand, are the dominated spaces, alternative images and usages of space that are symbolically imagined and lived by 'inhabitants'. This is the space for resistance. In short, Lefebvre presented a very clear picture of the process in which space is produced: struggle among competing and contesting images and usages, especially

the dominant and the dominated, all of which have a desire to impose their own ideals on physical space, in which we move bodily following the images and usages and against them.

Both Foucault's heterotopias and Lefebvre's social space had been rather neglected after their publication. It was Edward Soja who almost single-handedly highlighted these ideas when he advocated 'postmodern geography' which is the project to spatialise social theory, or more precisely to spatialise Western Marxist theory (1989). He shook the discipline of geography, which had been content to be a descriptive subject, to pay attention to hidden politics and ideology, or, more precisely, relations of power, inscribed into space. He coined the word 'thirdspace' to transcend binarisms of the real material world and imagined representations usually attached to the notion of space. 'Third' in thirdspace also implies 'another', which in practice succeeded Foucault's heterotopias and Lefebvre's spaces of representations. By introducing this notion of 'thirdspace'; Soja tried to reveal the dynamic process of the human experience of space.

Independently of this line, but still under the strong influence of Foucault, geographers at Syracuse University also paid close attention to the notion of place (Agnew 1987, Agnew and Duncan 1989). Their aim was to focus on and to explain geographical variations in social organisations and political behaviour, which can be regarded as a part of the intellectual trend in the 1980s to deconstruct the ideology and institution of nation-state and nationalism. In other words, it was their aim to disclose the myth of homogenised nature and population within national boundaries from a political point of view, which inevitably brought forward spatially distributed power relations and resistance to the dominant spatial order forced by the state. Here again, they highlighted the existence of 'other' spaces.

The third group focused on the pictorial representation of space. Because of their concern for visual representation, they preferred to use the term and the concept of 'landscape' rather than 'place'. This group was strongly influenced by art history, especially by the Warburg school whose theoretical method of analysis was established by Erwin Panofsky (1939, 1970). The distinguished character of this school's method is to regard a work of art as a text that can be read by placing it back

into the cultural and historical context in which the work was produced. Panofsky further divided their method into two categories: iconography for a verbatim interpretation of each item or symbol depicted in a picture, iconology for the extraction of consciously and unconsciously expressed ideological, social, political, and economic spirit of the time (Panofsky 1970: 51-81, Cosgrove and Daniels 1988: 1-2).

British historical geographers applied this method to their own discipline from a Marxist point of view, ie how a dominant mode of production was reflected in the visual representation. They regarded visual art of landscape (paintings, maps, photographs, gardens etc) as representations of historically and culturally specific ways of experiencing and perceiving the world. Cosgrove, as a leading figure of this group, demonstrated beautifully how Western European landscape paintings and gardens from the 15th century to the 19th century reflected the transformation of the dominant social formation system from feudalism to capitalism (1984). He stressed a unifying principle, or a gathering effect, of the notion and practice of landscape, by which he meant that landscape as a genre of art created an undivided total entity in which everything was related by giving a frame or boundaries to its object. The unifying principle also means that landscape is created as a result of the active involvement of a human subject with his/her physical surroundings. Landscape, then, is recognised here as an image of physical surroundings represented through a subjective human experience. This experience can be collective, which is the object of iconological analysis, and in this case the landscape is considered as a social product produced by a particular social group.

What was revealed from this approach was inevitably a perception and an ideal form of environment experienced or held by the dominant or established members of a society who produced, or commissioned or consumed, more precisely, such representations. The very basic technique to produce landscape art in post-Renaissance Western art itself demonstrates this condition. Perspective places the seeing subject outside of the landscape and organises all the elements in order in a frame from that position. In other words, the 'reality' of the space represented by landscape art is the one which is experienced in that way by the dominant members

of society. The geographers who introduced the notion of landscape from art history to social science to analyse spatial perception represented in western European art therefore highlighted a particular aspect, or visual expression, of place experienced by those who had the power to control the space.

1.2.2. Anthropology of place

Under the intellectual influence of cultural geographers, anthropologists started to pay attention to the concepts of place and landscape in the 1990s⁶. One of the earliest examples is James F. Weiner's study of the Foi of Papua New Guinea (1991). He described how the Foi people created a poetical and spiritual relationship with their surroundings and ancestors through dreaming and singing, both of which took place in particular locations. He also focused on the way they inscribed meaning on the landscape through everyday activity. In addition to Heidegger, the influence of the first group of cultural geographers' works was clearly shown. Weiner adopted a phenomenological approach, rather than a then still influential constructionist approach, to write his ethnography of Foi's experience of making their sense of place.

After Weiner, a formal conversation between geographers of the third group and anthropologists took place at University College London, and the result was published under Bender's editorship (1993). In addition to the British preference for, if not preoccupation with, the concept, the academic orientation of the geographers involved and UCL's strong inclination for material culture contributed to the British anthropologists' adoption of the concept and the term 'landscape' rather than the much broader alternative of 'place' to highlight and analyse our lived spatial

⁶ A notable exception was produced by Myers in 1986 as ethnography of Australian Aborigines. Although he stated an influence of unspecified phenomenologically inspired works, his attention to the concept of place seems to have been brought more by the political situation in which he conducted his fieldwork. His fieldwork was carried out in the 1970s when the Aborigines started their land claim movement and the government assured the Aborigines of their self-determination of the settlement, which inevitably highlighted the Aboriginal concept of land tenure and land rights. Myers' ethnography of the Pintupi focused on their relationship to the environment, especially in relation to the Dreaming, or a narrative of their mythological and ancestral past. Through the Dreaming the Pintupi inscribe and read their history on the natural landscape. Myers presented how the Pintupi created a personally meaningful relationship with their surroundings in a poetical way and therefore

experience and perception. Although Bender played down the visual and perspective connotations of the concept and some of the essays in the collection went beyond the limitations of a phenomenological approach, the term 'landscape' inevitably bound the enquiry of our spatial experiences to the concept of sight and a seeing subject.

Independently of the UCL case, another gathering of anthropologists took place in 1989 at the London School of Economics to discuss the possibility of developing the anthropology of landscape, the result of which was published under the editorship of Hirsch and O'Hanlon (1995). Although this was also an inter-disciplinary project with art history and geography, it was more concerned with anthropology. In a sense, this project was an attempt to anthropologise the concept of landscape which had been discussed and developed in art history and geography. It was an attempt to remove particular historical and socio-cultural connotations of the modern Western elitist idea from the 'landscape' concept. Therefore, in the introduction Hirsch critiqued the existing static definition and connotation given to the notion by art historians and geographers (of the third group) and re-defined it as a perpetual dynamic process. He introduced, using the terminology of landscape painting, two modes of our perception of the world, that is, 'actual everyday social life' as 'foreground' and 'perceived potentiality' as 'background', and then defined 'landscape' as a process of interaction between these two modes to produce actual human spatial experiences⁷. By introducing this dynamic, the anthropologists who participated in this collection went far beyond the conventional sphere of meaning covered by the term since the process includes more than visual perception and experience. However, the problem here is whether it is appropriate to use the term 'landscape' to name and deal with the dynamic process or experience they discussed. Although 'landscape' is an evocative term and relatively unproblematised in anthropology and therefore attractive as a name for the new anthropological attempt to reveal the nature of human spatial experiences, it seems to be very difficult to remove its conventional meaning. While the anthropologists focused on our spatial

they created their own sense of place.

⁷ A similar dichotomy can be made from the etymology of the word 'topos' (Imafuku 1991:14). In addition to 'place', this word of Greek origin means 'a rhetorical convention or formula'. In other words, 'topos' is made up with a portion of physical space occupied and dwelled in by persons and poetical imagination distinguishes such a section.

experience, or our topographical being-in-the-worldness, the very term highlights its visual aspect.

Perhaps sensing this limitation of the term, or being free from the British academic preoccupation, American anthropologists preferred to use a more neutral and general term, 'place', to deal with the same issue. The result of a seminar discussing this issue held in 1991 at the School of American Research was published in 1996 with Feld and Basso as editors. In the introduction, Feld and Basso traced the social scientific studies of 'place', to which this section owes a lot. This group used phenomenology, and the concept of dwelling, as their guidelines for conducting an anthropological study of spatial experiences. They also highlighted 'local knowledge' or localised forms of spatial expressions. Therefore, throughout the collection, the anthropologists tried to show particularity and diversity of spatial experiences and imagination by which persons give meaning to their environment. Although the term they adopted was not the same, just like the LSE group, this group of anthropologists also focused on the interaction between an everyday practical reality and a poetical ideal as the process to produce a sense of place. They highlighted various media, such as story-telling, singing, senses, emotions and representations, as a field in which such a process takes place with intensity. They emphasised the point that different groups used different media to produce their own sense of place.

The most recent development of the anthropology of place came from those who were interested in trans-national movement of persons. As one of the forerunners of this group, Appadurai highlighted a cultural dynamic called 'de-territorialisation' as one of the most urgent and important contemporary anthropological topics to tackle (1991)⁸. He pointed out that one of the fundamental

⁸ Prior to this paper, Appadurai had initiated another anthropological problem on space and place, more precisely on the anthropological representation of a particular region (1986). He pointed out that in anthropological studies a certain concept tends to be tied to a certain region, and as a result the image of the region is dominated by the concept, like India as a place of hierarchy. Responding to his argument, Abu-Lughod added the concept of textuality (1989), which was originally advanced by Said (1978). Textuality refers to the influence of an accumulation of texts on the process of construction of a dominant image of a region. A dominant image of an anthropological region is created by the accumulation of anthropological texts which are produced under the strong influence of previous texts. That is to say, they argued that the anthropological representation of a place, in the form of ethnography, was more of a discursively created simplified entity rather than one reflected by the complex 'reality' of the place. This issue was further discussed in Fardon (1990) and Rodman (1992).

As for the anthropology of Britain, if such an independent area exists, because of its rather thin and

characteristic of (post-)modernity was its ability to loosen the bond which used to firmly link people, wealth and territories. As a result, it becomes an increasingly common condition of ordinary persons' lives throughout the world to move out of or away from their original dwelling places for various reasons. Some are willing, some are reluctant, and others are forced to accept this condition of movement. At the same time, because of the ever increasing amount of circulation of information, of which the main source is the mass media, those who remain in their original place can also imagine their 'possible' lives somewhere else. Appadurai urged anthropologists to pay attention to this actual or imagined de-territorialised condition of cultural reproduction, or of the formation of collective identities.

Clifford argued that this condition of de-territorialised culture, which became explicit because of the on-going large-scale displacement of our time, was actually a natural state of culture, and the long accepted notion of territorially fixed and bounded, or 'localised', to use his word, culture was artificially constrained, to which anthropologists actively contributed (1992). He then advocated reconsidering the concept of culture as a site of both dwelling and travelling. Stating a reservation about the connotations attached to the notion of 'travel', such as European, male, bourgeois, scientific, heroic and recreational activity, Clifford suggested using the term as a universal practice and condition of producing culture along with 'dwelling', to which he did not attach the phenomenological connotation. He pointed out that a cultural figure moves from one location to another (a traveller) while he/she dwells somewhere (a dweller), and both modes of being are carried out both physically and mentally.

A similar statement was made by Gupta and Ferguson (1992). They also criticised the social scientific representation of space, which presupposes discontinuity of space; rather they were opposed more specifically to the idea of territorialised culture, or 'the assumed isomorphism of people, place, and culture'.

sporadic accumulation of studies, the area has not formed any definite 'zone of theory'. There were certainly some influential ethnographies, notably Strathern's (1981, 1982ab, 1984, 1992) and Cohen's (1982, 1985, 1986, 1987) works. Moreover, together with their academic leadership, their interests of kinship and social boundaries respectively have been a kind of central issue for those who wrote ethnographies based on their fieldwork in Britain, which, however, still were not strong enough to define the area.

Instead they suggested starting with the presumption that spaces were always hierarchically interconnected, from which social imagination cuts out a bounded space such as a society or a community. In other words, they proposed that a place, which can be a (provisional) site of a society or a community or a nation, is not a permanent given but a constructed temporary state, and that the construction is a perpetually evolving process carried out by a social imagination working in the midst of hierarchically organised power relations which connect the whole world. Gupta and Ferguson pointed out that in the midst of globalisation, which makes explicit the cultural, social and economic interconnectedness of various spaces and blurs long accepted boundaries, the desire to have culturally distinct places is expressed more strongly than any other time. After reconfirming the social scientific agreement that our spatial experience is always socially constructed, they urged anthropologists to pay more attention to the power relations in which the cultural distinctiveness, or our spatial experience and imagination, is produced. They highlighted the process of the re-territorialisation of persons and cultures, which consists of various heterogeneous elements such as class, gender, race and sexuality, after the de-territorialisation which globalisation has made a contemporary anthropological problem.

Gupta and Ferguson later edited a collection of essays on re-territorialisation, or persons' active efforts of place-making, after the recognition of the de-territorialisation of culture (1997). The same issue was also discussed by Scandinavian anthropologists (Olwig and Hastrup 1997), to which Ferguson subscribed. Their concern was the way in which persons in the contemporary world 'site' their cultures. Here again, what they focused on were persons' (collective) conscious efforts, which can be physical or imaginary, to relate themselves to a particular space. Anthropologists, who are particularly interested in material culture, and archaeologists gathered at the World Archaeological Congress in 1999 also discussed this issue of place-making (Bender 2001). They highlighted 'landscapes on the move', by which they considered the spatial experience of those who were forced to move.

Thus, the recently resurgent anthropological interest in the concept and phenomenon of 'place' was, ironically in a sense, took off partly by the increasingly

common condition of the contemporary world, that is, displacement, or, more generally movement of persons, which anthropologists have to face in their field no matter where they are. Facing this condition, anthropologists pay attention not only to the causes and effects of such a movement, that is, the social, political and economic conditions that cause such a movement and the conflicts caused by such a movement, but also to persons spatial experience and imagination: how they reconcile themselves with the new environment they move in or how they deal with the old environment they left behind. In a sense this actual physical movement made explicit the constructive nature of our relationship with space and the conditions in which the process of construction takes place. Furthermore, the intellectual stimulation anthropologists had received from cultural geographers, and the philosophical thinking behind it, provides useful and valuable points to begin the understanding of such a process.

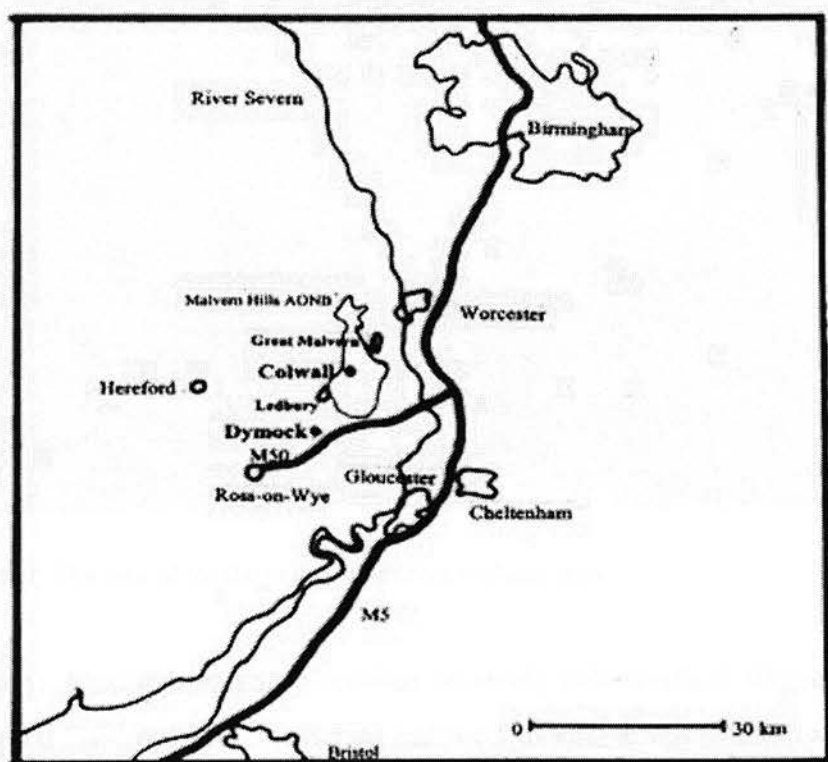
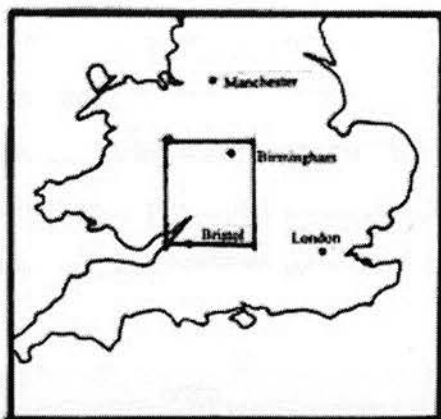
1.3. The Making of *Our Dwelling Place*

1.3.1. The making of *Our Dwelling Place*

Our Dwelling Place is located at the end of the anthropological and the broader social scientific thinking of space and place described in the previous section. The thesis shares their interests in displaced, or, to be more precise, migrated persons and their conscious efforts to relate to the new environment. However, I must confess here that when I wrote a research proposal for my fieldwork, the theme was not exactly what I intended to explore. I expected to conduct fieldwork to examine the relationship between landscape and nationalism, or more specifically landscape and Englishness. I was interested in the role of landscape in the process by which English people internalise or personalise their belongingness to England. Therefore, I looked for a location renowned for its 'typical' English landscape. I studied numerous English landscape photograph collections and also asked my colleagues at the department to suggest appropriate places. I made a list of potential locations and then visited them one by one. One of the locations happened to be the Malvern Hills area

in West Midlands, which I had never heard of before.

Map



I still remember the first time I climbed up the Malvern Hills. It was on a fine midsummer day. I climbed a rather steep slope from North Malvern. Somehow I just concentrated on climbing, while thinking of other things. When I noticed it I had almost been on the ridges. I tried to see the famous landscape which I had already seen in photographs. I, then, found myself dumbfounded. There was a breathtakingly beautiful landscape spreading out to the horizon in front of me. It was majestic as well as benign, colourful as well as serene. The air was transparent but typically hazy which added an intimate tone to the landscape. Bewitched, I looked at the view for a long time. It was the flat Worcestershire side. The Malvern Hills run from north to



Plate 1: The view of the flat eastern side of the Malvern Hills

south and form a natural boundary between relatively industrialised Worcestershire and agricultural Herefordshire. I stood up and went to look at the Herefordshire side of the hills. The landscape of the other side was dramatically different. The gently undulating agricultural land with lots of wooded parts went all the way toward the Welsh mountains. It was an instantly engaging cosy and rustic view. I again spent a long time sitting there, appreciating the landscape. Before I stood up again, I had

made up my mind to choose the Malvern area as my field. To be honest, it was a rather impulsive, spur-of-the-moment decision. I did not much consider about practical and academic matters. I did not know a single soul down there, nor did I know much about the local social structure, but I simply wanted to live there. It was rather a foolish way to choose a site for fieldwork, but in hindsight the way I chose Malvern as my field was the typical course taken by many of in-migrants with whom I was to work. But, of course, at that time, and even until a relatively late stage of my fieldwork, I did not pay much attention to it.



Plate 2: The view of the 'rural' side of the Malvern Hills with British Camp

Thus, I chose rather vaguely the Malvern Hills area as my field. The area is located at the southern edge of West Midlands. It is also located just at the centre of the three counties of Worcestershire, Herefordshire and Gloucestershire. The hills rise rather abruptly at the western edge of the perfectly flat Severn Plain, in the middle of which the flood-prone river Severn runs parallel to the hills. Although the very highest point is just over 400 feet, because of the contrast the hills look much higher than they are. The eight-mile ridges run exactly from north to south. The area

around the hills is designated as the Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and has long been a popular holiday destination for people from all over the West Midlands. The area attracts more than a million visitors a year, most of whom come mainly for walking. They tend to first drop in at the town of Great Malvern, which nestles at the northern edge of the eastern side of the hills. The town of 30,000 people was originally developed as a health resort in the 19th century, and still boasts a number of hotels, a theatre and good restaurants. The Victorian town is also known as an academic area because of the conspicuous presence of public schools and a research institute which used to belong to the Ministry of Defence. The town is well connected to major cities by a transportation network. Birmingham is within one hour by rail and even closer by car using the M5. There is also a direct railway service to London which takes two-and-a-half hours. Birmingham is 50km north-east and London is 170km south-east from Malvern as the crow flies.

I first wanted to live in one of the villages on the western side of the hills since I intended to conduct my research mainly on the western, more 'rural', side of the hills. There were two main reasons for this intention: one was that the landscape on the western side is a 'typical' picture postcard image of the English countryside and I wanted to talk with those who lived in the landscape; the other was that I assumed it would be much easier and quicker to get to know people in a smaller community. However, I soon learned that it was very difficult for a single person to find a suitable accommodation in the villages. Available options were either to buy or to rent a whole house, neither of which I could afford. Instead, I rented a room in a house on the eastern side of the hills just outside Great Malvern and later bought a car to 'commute' to the other side of the hills. The Victorian house I settled in was five doors away from the house where Edward Elgar composed the *Pomp and Circumstance Marches*. The view from the house was splendid. I stayed at the house for the entire fieldwork period, that is from October 1999 to February 2001.

I spent most of the first few months at local libraries to learn local histories and to collect miscellaneous basic factual and statistical data. I also devoted some time taking driving lessons; it is absolutely necessary to have one's own means of transport in rural areas. At the same time I wrote letters to various local, mainly

conservation and outdoor related, organisations and societies to introduce myself. As I did not know anyone there, I needed a lead to get to know people. Generally speaking, in England one has to be introduced by someone to get to know people. My intention was to conduct a series of interviews with a fixed set of people at regular intervals. I expected these organisations and societies to introduce me to their members who live on the western side of the hills. At this point I was not particularly interested in the organisations themselves, but by contacting them I unwittingly became part of a particular circle of persons. Most of these organisations and societies are run by those who in-migrated to the area, these persons also forming the bulk of their membership. This unexpected factor subsequently considerably altered the direction and the theme of my research.

Meanwhile, I gradually began to receive replies to my letters, and I had meetings with committee members of these organisations. Most were retired professionals. They were extremely kind and helpful. They introduced me to their members and also to their personal friends who, they thought, might be interested in my research. In addition to this route, my landlady, who works locally as a very competent dog trainer, kindly made it possible for me to see those who live on the western side of the hills, and those to whom I was introduced were also willing to introduce me to their friends and relatives. In this way, I began to accumulate potential candidates for my interview. Finally 17 persons agreed to do the interview. With a few exceptions, those interviewees live all over the three parishes on the western side of the hills. At this point, what I was interested in were individuals, not communities or groups. In a sense, the line-up of the interviewees was skewed since 12 out of the 17 persons were in-migrants of various durations. This skew was not intentional but simply reflected the practical availability of those willing to be interviewed.

I thus began the interview, which was based on a prepared questionnaire, and was recorded on tape. I spent a considerable amount of time producing transcriptions of the tapes, which I sent back to interviewees to read and comment on for the next session. However, the topics I wanted to discuss failed to attract enthusiastic responses, which was partly caused by my poor command of English and

lack of ability to produce spontaneous conversation. In many cases their answers were more like reiterations of well-worn clichés. There was not much of the enthusiasm which they had shown when they talked about their life history in their responses. I began to sense that the proposed topic was somewhat inappropriate. I felt that the large issues of nationalism and Englishness were rather remote and irrelevant topics for these persons and for the particular locality with whom and in which I happened to have started my fieldwork. I realised that the topics were not something that the pool of interviewees wanted to talk about.

Meanwhile, I tried to attend local gatherings as much as possible, which included both formal public meetings and social events given by local societies. Some of the meetings were related to a housing development plan in Colwall, which is one of the three parishes on the western side of the hills. The plan was developed by Herefordshire Council within the framework of its Unitary Development Plan, to which some of the local residents were bitterly opposed. I also learned in Colwall that a group of people had been producing a document in which they assessed their own, specially built, environment. At the same time, I started to realise the importance of 'planning' in the English countryside. Most of those persons I interviewed spoke to me about something related to 'planning' when we had a chat before or after the 'proper' interview, for example their concern about the development plan or their disapproval of alterations done to nearby property. I noticed that not just my interviewees but more or less everyone I talked to mentioned 'planning' at one time or another. Not having any knowledge of 'planning', it took quite a while for me to realise its importance and the strong interest persons living in the countryside had in planning-related matters.

Being at something of a standstill as regards the topics of nationalism and Englishness, topics in which I myself had rapidly been losing interest, I decided to change tack. I rather wanted to know what persons in my field were interested in, instead of forcing them to talk about what I was interested in. By this time I was strongly aware that I was mainly among those persons who had moved into this locality. At the same time I was quite impressed by their strong attachment to the locality. I, as a kind of temporary in-migrant, had also developed a strong attachment

to the locality and started wishing it were 'my place'. I decided to adopt this attachment to the locality, or sense of place, as the theme of my fieldwork. I also decided to highlight two channels through which the persons in my field expressed their attachment to the locality. In other words, I decided to focus on the means by which in-migrated persons create their own senses of place in the location in which they had no previous connections to rely on.

One of the two channels to be examined in detail in *Our Dwelling Place* is the British spatial management system, which is almost, but not entirely, a synonym of 'planning'. This topic is discussed in Chapter 5. Those who live in the countryside have to form and maintain their space within the framework provided by the system. In Chapter 5, I shall describe and examine this system and the regulations that have created and shaped the current nature of English rural space. I shall also consider a settlement model on which the system is based. I want to show to what extent English rural space is strictly controlled and monitored contrary to its generally accepted image of carefree laid-back space. However, people in a rural space do not simply follow blindly the regulations imposed by the system but also actively negotiate with it to realise their ideal space. This chapter then highlights a particular section of the in-migrated persons and their influence on the current state of rural space. The last section of the chapter deals with the ownership of rural space. Who owns, or is supposed to own, what and in what manner.

The other channel is the local past. This theme also emerged from one of the chance encounters I had while I attended local gatherings. It was a guided walking tour organised by the John Masefield Society as part of the Ledbury Poetry Festival. I bought a ticket more for fun than for research. However, while we walked from the edge of the Malvern Hills to the town of Ledbury stopping here and there to hear Masefield's poems at relevant locations, I got to know some of the organisers. Naturally they were curious about me. I was the only non-white person there. Although Malvern area is only one hour away from Birmingham, except for students at public schools, it is still very rare to see non-white persons there, especially at an event like a poetry festival. I introduced myself and explained what I was doing there.

One of the organisers became quite interested in my research and kindly invited me for a cup of tea, an invitation which I was pleased to accept. Later I visited her house in Dymock, which is located at the north end of Gloucestershire, close to the southern edge of the Malvern Hills. Dymock was well outside of the area I initially chose as my field.

She offered to tell me the story of the Dymock Poets, which I vaguely remembered. However, being a Japanese person who had never read any English poems, I failed to recognise all six poets or to appreciate the literary importance of their time in Dymock. I was simply mildly entertained by her story of the poets, which she must have told many times before. I was rather interested in her passion for the poets. She was one of the committee members of a locally established literary society set up to commemorate the poets. She had also set up a somewhat small-scale private interpretation centre on the poets in her own garden. After the story of the poets themselves, I asked how she had got involved with these poets. It was then that her story became intriguing for me. She related the past 15 years' local history, together with her own personal history. I was fascinated by what had happened in Dymock and by what she and her friends, most of whom had moved into the Dymock area from somewhere else, had done. Her story went back and forth, and was rather entangled here and there. She was not very sure about some parts of the story. So many things had happened in Dymock. She brought out several cardboard boxes packed with all sorts of documents, photographs, maps, letters, and so on. It became my routine to visit Dymock once a week to read and check all that material and then to ask questions. Just like persons around Malvern with whom I met and talked regularly, she not only answered my questions patiently but also introduced me to other persons in Dymock and walked around the area with me. In this manner Dymock became my field. Furthermore, the conversation I had with her made me realise the importance of local history among the in-migrants. It was a crucial element towards the construction of their sense of place.

The consciousness of, or the passion for, the local history expressed by the in-migrated population is to be described and considered in detail in Chapter 4. This chapter examines the role of temporal elements in their spatial experiences and

imagination. My experience in Dymock made me aware of the similar attempts I had already known but had paid little attention to in the Malvern area. Chapter 4 first provides more, but different types of examples of in-migrants' expression of their passion for the past. The chapter then examines the recent rise in public interest in 'local distinctiveness' as a wider context in which all the activities I describe in this ethnography took place. Here, the distinctiveness of a particular locality is supposed to be a product of its history. The distinctiveness is believed to have been formed with the accumulation of time. In this thinking each locality is believed to have its own flow of time running from past to present. The recently highlighted 'local distinctiveness' tends to be presented as palpable, in many cases visible, evidence of the continuity of a locality. *Our Dwelling Place* regards this rising interest in 'local distinctiveness' as an expression of a desire to confirm such continuity. For those who look for the distinctiveness in their own place, such as those persons described in this thesis, this desire for confirmation is also the desire to be part of it. *Our Dwelling Place* regards this desire as playing a crucial role in the process to form one's sense of belongingness to a place. However, being part of the continuity can take another form. Chapter 4 considers two different relationships between people and place as an opposition of 'the locals' and 'the incomers', which is a classic topic in anthropological studies of British communities. After this consideration, the chapter examines in detail the idiosyncratic attitude of in-migrants towards the local history, which is documentation. *Our Dwelling Place* argues that this act of documentation, which can take various forms, enables in-migrants to relate to the imagined continuity of the locality.

Together Chapters 4 and 5 form the second part of the thesis, which is organised thematically, temporal elements in spatial experiences for Chapter 4 and spatial management in order to realise an ideal place for Chapter 5. Preceding chapters, which form the first part, provide the context of the discussion developed in the second part. However, the chapters are not merely written as usual ethnographic introductions of fields, which a busy reader might be tempted to skip. In addition to the usual function, these two chapters introduce particular ethnographic material which is further enriched and then analysed and theorised in detail in Chapters 4 and

5. Chapter 2 describes Dymock. Following a general ethnographic description of the place, the chapter highlights the past twenty years' history of the locality in relation to the emergence of a new image associated with the locality. The chapter introduces briefly a little local historical episode which attracted the attention of some in-migrated persons. Chapter 2 then follows chronologically the local activities that evolved from this little episode. It describes the way the in-migrants interacted with local history. Chapter 3 describes the other locality, Colwall. Again, after a general description, this chapter highlights the way persons in Colwall negotiate with planning regulations to realise their ideal form of 'village'. It introduces a society recently formed by in-migrants there and focuses on one of their projects to evaluate their environment. The chapter also describes the housing development plan, which made me aware of 'planning', and the local reaction to it. Although each chapter has its own point of emphasis, the elements discussed in later chapters appear in both of them⁹.

Chapter 6 independently forms the third part. In this part I shall introduce another angle or context to understand the place-making process considered in previous chapters. The localities described in this thesis are perceived to exist in a particular context by those who live there, which is the countryside. Chapter 6 deals with this heavily culturally value-laden space. Persons in my field felt very strongly about the countryside. Regardless of their backgrounds, almost all of them had a profound attachment to this space. Even those who stated that the locality they lived in had become suburbanised expressed their personal attachment to the countryside. The spaces described in *Our Dwelling Place* are not only perceived as discrete units of locality such as Colwall and Dymock but are also perceived as a part of the countryside which is associated with particular forms of life, values and beliefs.

This space has long played an important role in a socio-cultural spatial imagination in England. The rural idyll has a very strong power to drive people to

⁹ The main reason I describe two localities in two separate chapters is in a sense a small personal tribute to my friends in both places who made me realise the particular elements of place-making in contemporary semi-rural England. Although almost all the elements had been there in each locality to be observed, I would not have noticed the importance of some of them without my experience of the other locality. In other words, although there are some differences between the two localities, it is not my intention to make a comparison between them.

take particular action. Many of the in-migrants in my field moved more or less under a particular influence of this ideal, and some of their activities described in previous chapters were also strongly influenced by this ideal. However, this form of ideal is not the only one to be projected on the countryside. There are other ideals projected on the same space.

While I was writing this thesis back in Edinburgh, a pro-hunting lobby organised a large demonstration against a proposed ban on fox-hunting with dogs and some of my friends down in the Malvern area, most of whom are not in-migrants, joined this demonstration. They organised a local event and a coach tour to participate in a demonstration march in London. I went down to my field again and joined them. I had been very well aware of the importance of the countryside and wanted to write about it to give a context in which the place-making process I described and analysed in previous chapters took place, but I had been unable to find an effective and meaningful way to write about the countryside. The hunting dispute, which incidentally came up to me, turned out to be an ideal stage to present various elements attached to the countryside. I decided to use this topical incident to describe the countryside. Therefore it is not the aim of this chapter to discuss the hunting issue per se.

Chapter 6 will show other ideals projected on the countryside which do not readily correspond to the ideal held by the persons I described. The chapter covers the media reports of the event since this space of the countryside exists in 'representation space' as well as in physical space. The countryside is a vague entity with a sense of definite existence. This ambiguous nature of the space largely depends on the media. Being led by the hunting debate, the chapter then explores the hegemonically organised nature of the countryside that is created and maintained by the idea and practice of private land ownership. The chapter finally examines changing, or contested, ideas of ownership of the countryside by introducing a concept of stewardship which is strongly supported by the in-migrated population.

Throughout the thesis, it is the efforts of in-migrants to create their sense of place in the countryside and the problems they face in the process that I focus on.

Despite the lack of personal connections, the persons I came across in the field showed a profound attachment to their localities. They invest a large amount of emotion, time and energy into the localities they have chosen. It is their desire to connect to their localities that I hope to understand and represent through the process of writing this thesis.

1.3.2. The arguments in *Our Dwelling Place*

Before getting into the main body of the text, I would like to briefly emphasise the principal points of argument of this thesis. First of all, it should be noted that this thesis is not written under the influence of particular theories or concepts. Those theories and concepts were used which best explained what I saw, heard and experienced in the field. Therefore the application of theories and concepts is rather contingent. In other words, this thesis is not a concept or theory driven but a field or data driven account. I first described what I had seen, heard, and experienced in the field and then looked for concepts or theories to understand them. The organisation of the thesis reflects this process.

As I made it clear by reviewing the past literature, I present this study as a contribution to the anthropology of place. More specifically, this is a study of a place-making process in which displaced persons create special, or personally meaningful, ties with their new environment. My special contribution is to shed a light on the activities of a somehow anthropologically over-looked middle-class population in a developed country. I do this by focusing on their countryside migration in England.

This act of migration and the consequent process of place-making in a new environment can be compared to an adoption process in kinship¹⁰. Both processes can be summarised as persons' efforts to produce links, or 'relatedness', between two parties which do not possess resources to claim 'natural' relationship. In her study of adoptees' reunion with their birth parents in Scotland, Carsten highlighted values of 'care' and 'effort' that were strongly asserted by adoptees:

¹⁰ I am indebted to Iris Jean-Klein for this point. After reading my draft thesis, she pointed out the similarity of the two processes and suggested that I look into kinship studies. She also directed my attention to the practice of 'care'.

The idea that the normal exchanges of kinship are not an automatic right but a privilege earned through the demonstrated hard effort that goes into nurturing and caring for a child was brought up by several interviewees [2000a:691]

She observed that the production of kinship, or a sense of relatedness, among adopted families was based on 'care', which was demonstrated by duration of time spent together, affection, and conscious efforts to create a special tie¹¹. Those adoptees dismissed 'an automatic bond of kinship given by the fact of birth' without 'care'. This sentiment and ideology of kinship was expressed by adoptees but I assume that the same view of kinship should be shared by adoptive parents as well.

Various activities of in-migrants that are to be described and analysed in detail in this thesis can be understood as an analogous process to this kinship production among families created as a result of adoption. The in-migrants' social position can easily be compared to that of adoptive parents. Just like adoptive parents they cannot have recourse to the 'natural' ties to claim their personally special and meaningful relationship with the locality they chose to live. Instead, they claim the relationship by demonstrating 'care'. They spend considerable amount of time and energy on 'caring' for their places; they learn about places, they try to 'improve' places, they complain and protest to various authorities to 'protect' places. Just like kinship, this spatial relationship, which can be described as a sense of place, is a process, rather than a given state, constructed through exercising 'care' demonstrated over time.

This thesis is specifically concerned with two aspects of such caring. The first of the two is about the knowledge embedded in a locality. Those who appear in

¹¹ Carsten also referred to the kinship ideology among gays and lesbians. Here again, those who are denied to resort to the 'natural' discourse to establish, or to legitimise, their relationship adapt duration in time as the source of kinship (2000a:695)

It is out of scope of this thesis, but the anthropology of place can learn a lot from kinship studies, or studies of relatedness. Especially from their view of kinship as a process of becoming not as a given static state of being. (c.f. Carsten 2000b) Carsten, for instance, in her ethnography of the Malays, reported a constructive nature of Malay kinship (1995, 1997). The Malays regard that kinship is formulated as a result of sharing a dwelling and meals. She especially focuses on a practice and ideology of sharing substance in the forms of rice, blood and milk. It is the accumulation of the shared substance over the time that, they believe, produces the relationship. This idea and practice of sharing substance to create a special and privileged relationship is also reported in many ethnographies, some of which focus on the relationship between people and place (eg. Daniel 1984, Gow 1995, Toren

this thesis showed strong passion to learn such spatial knowledge which they believe makes the locality 'distinctive', and this spatial knowledge takes a particular form, which is local history. I interpret their strong interest in local history as an expression of a tacitly shared belief in vernacular understanding of environment, which is the belief that every place has its own flow of time, or continuity. Persons in my fields try to relate to this imagined continuity in various manners. They study local history and write it down. They collect historical material and list them up. I call these activities 'documentation'. Documentation process includes text-making, map-drawing, exhibition display organising, and archive building activities. Some persons endeavour to perform the continuity by enacting an element in local history, or restoring particular historical conditions. I include these performatory activities in documentation process as well. Through this documenting process of local history persons actively and consciously engaged with the imagined continuity of the place. One of the main aims of this practice of 'documentation' is to objectify the imagined continuity. Put another way, it gives the imagined continuity visible and tangible forms which one can 'possess'. Caring here is, in a sense, expressed as a desire for possession. By 'possessing' a piece of temporal continuity embedded in a place, one becomes related to the imagined continuity¹².

The second aspect of caring is about a physical formation of a locality. Those in-migrants do not only show strong interest in the physical formation of a locality but also get actively involved with the process. By getting involved with the process they actually physically inscribe their values and ideal on the locality. This process of in-migrants' involvement with physical formation of rural space is often called 'rural gentrification', which works both as construction, or alteration and preservation of existing environment. In this process of rural gentrification, the caring takes a form of imposing their values and ideal onto a space. The ideal

1995).

¹² Here is another point of connection to adoption in kinship. Carsten points out the significance of objects among adoptees. She observed abundant display of family photographs and carefully collected and preserved various artefacts, such as letters, official documents and babies clothing, in their houses. She interprets this passion for the objects, which document their lives in their adopted families, as an evidence of their conscious efforts to produce history or to give clear tangible historical depth to their identity (2000:691-2). The point here is that the desire to be related to an entity, both to a place and to a family, is expressed as the passion for collecting and possessing historical objects.

imposed by those in-migrants are generally known as the rural idyll. The rural idyll is one of the main reasons which brought these in-migrants into the rural space in the first place. In the context of rural space formation, this vague idea of rural idyll takes a particular form, which is the idea of village. This thesis examines the idea of village in detail as a concrete expression of the vague but tremendously powerful idea of the rural idyll. The idea of village is used as a model to form a contemporary rural space.

The idea of village is not only used by the in-migrants but also incorporated into the state rural space management system which is usually called 'planning'. Contrary to the popularly accepted notion of the countryside as a space of freedom, the actual countryside in England is tightly controlled and strictly monitored by various regulations, and planning is one of the main regulations. In a sense, the English rural space is more like a craft created and maintained entity within the framework of these regulations rather than a natural space. These regulations are not dry and neutral rules but heavily culturally loaded expressions of spatial formation. And the in-migrants in this thesis use these regulations as a means to realise their ideal space. Some of them voluntarily act as the frontline force of the system to implement and monitor the regulations. In other words, the body of regulations is perceived not so much as restriction but as a useful tool to control one's environment and realise ideal spatial formation¹³. Caring in this aspect is expressed as a desire for control.

Perhaps these double desires of possession and control may appear in an analysis of any close relationship between two parties. However, the actual material expressions of these desires analysed in this thesis are closely related to the unique characters of their practitioners. In other words, the persons described in this thesis care for their adopted places in their idiosyncratic manners: documentation and management through regulations. This is another dimension of this study of place-making in contemporary semi-rural England. *Our Dwelling Place* is also a study of a particular aspect of English class¹⁴. Ethnographies of England can hardly

¹³ The relationship between the authorities, such as the state and various councils which create and maintain the regulations, and these in-migrants is not always so cosy or close. Rather, as I describe later, the in-migrants sometimes confront to planning decisions made by those authorities. However, it is the regulations that they have recourse to when they challenge those unfavourable decisions since those regulations were originally created on the same principle as their ideal.

¹⁴ 'Class' is perhaps the most common and popular, but not always explicit, way and category to

avoid this vernacular social category. Just like race and ethnicity in American social discourse, class in England has enormous cultural salience (c.f. Ortner 1991, 1998, 2000). Various ethnographers of England have dealt with this concept from different angles: Strathern (1981, 1982a, 1984) and Edwards (2000) through kinship and locality, Cassidy (2000) through race horse breeding, and Reed (2002b) through a literary society. *Our Dwelling Place* does the same task through countryside migration and spatial formation of rural areas.

Those who appear in this thesis would present and describe themselves as members of the 'middle class'. And countryside migration is generally regarded as a typical middle class act. However, a closer look at the in-migrants whose various activities will be considered in this thesis reveals a number of common dispositions which cannot be applied to the middle class as a whole. And it is these dispositions that explain why they choose the particular forms of practice, or documentation and management through regulations, when they try to connect themselves to a locality. To describe them, I borrow the term 'service class' from sociology. It is an academic concept circulated only within a narrow circle of sociologists. By no means would the in-migrants describe themselves by such a term. They probably do not even know that such a concept exists. And strong scepticism has been expressed by some sociologists about the concept (see Giddens 1973). Nevertheless, I use this term since it is a handy label to distinguish this group of middle class and to highlight particular habitual practices associated with them. The nature of the service class is to be described in the main body of text, and it is sufficient to say here that the service class consists mainly of those who are in managerial and administrative positions, both in private and public sectors, together with professionals. To put it crudely here, document making and regulation handling can be described as their second nature, acquired through their professional careers. They are efficient at and accustomed to such practices. They, at the same time, feel comfortable and confident when they are engaged with such practices. Expressed simply, the thesis tries to explain why the

describe and determine a person's social identity in England. Class system and English society are almost synonyms for both the English themselves and for foreigners. 'Class' here is not always or only determined by one's economic position. It is also a description of one's behaviour, disposition, life style, sense of value and belief. In other words, it is the dominant vernacular social description in England. Here again, I thank Iris Jean-Klein for directing my attention to this concept.

persons in my field employ these particular practices when they want to emplace themselves in the localities they chose from the viewpoint of habitualised behaviour idiosyncratic to a particular class. Expressions of caring are examined from the class point of view.

Another aspect of class consideration in *Our Dwelling Place* is to do with a hegemonic order set in a rural space. As I pointed out, those in-migrants are under the strong influence of the rural idyll whose main components are the countryside and tradition. Both of the elements have long been closely associated with upper class, which is in practice a synonym of landed class in England. In other words, the service class in-migrants appropriate the upper class cultural values, which can be regarded as their incorporation into the cultural hegemonic order topped by the landed class. Yet, their double desires of possession and control prompt them to challenge the existing spatial hegemony set in the rural space they actually moved into. This spatial hegemony, or a particular social structure and relationship in the countryside, is ultimately based on owning land. Therefore the idea of private landownership is frequently and strongly expressed both overtly and covertly in the rural space. Although the in-migrants here are relatively affluent persons, not all of them are wealthy enough to own considerable amount of land, or some of them would not even wish to own such a quantity of land as their private property. In either case, they tend to express doubt about large scale private, or exclusive, ownership of land in the countryside, and some practices closely associated with private landownership in the countryside are also often described dismissively. Instead, those in-migrants express their preference to public ownership of the land in various ways. In this light, one of their unique ways of showing 'care', that is, management through regulation reveals another meaning. In that particular manner they indirectly exercise power over land legally belonging to a particular owner. The capacity to influence can create a sense of ownership. *Our Dwelling Place* considers the complex reality of hegemonic order set in the countryside by focusing on the forms and meaning of landownership.

Chapter 2: Digital

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Part I

The first part of the book is devoted to the study of the basic concepts of digital logic and digital systems. It begins with a discussion of the binary number system and the binary representation of numbers. This is followed by a chapter on logic gates and combinational logic circuits. The next chapter deals with sequential logic circuits and the design of counters and shift registers. The final chapter in this part discusses the design of digital systems using logic synthesis techniques.

The second part of the book is devoted to the study of digital communication systems. It begins with a discussion of the basic concepts of digital communication and the binary representation of numbers. This is followed by a chapter on digital modulation techniques and the design of digital communication systems. The next chapter deals with digital signal processing and the design of digital filters. The final chapter in this part discusses the design of digital systems using logic synthesis techniques.

The third part of the book is devoted to the study of digital image processing. It begins with a discussion of the basic concepts of digital image processing and the binary representation of numbers. This is followed by a chapter on digital image enhancement techniques and the design of digital image processing systems. The next chapter deals with digital image compression techniques and the design of digital image processing systems. The final chapter in this part discusses the design of digital systems using logic synthesis techniques.

The fourth part of the book is devoted to the study of digital signal processing. It begins with a discussion of the basic concepts of digital signal processing and the binary representation of numbers. This is followed by a chapter on digital filter design techniques and the design of digital filter systems. The next chapter deals with digital signal processing techniques and the design of digital signal processing systems. The final chapter in this part discusses the design of digital systems using logic synthesis techniques.

The fifth part of the book is devoted to the study of digital systems. It begins with a discussion of the basic concepts of digital systems and the binary representation of numbers. This is followed by a chapter on digital system design techniques and the design of digital system systems. The next chapter deals with digital system processing techniques and the design of digital system processing systems. The final chapter in this part discusses the design of digital systems using logic synthesis techniques.

Chapter 2: Dymock

2.1 Location: geography, history, community

2.1.1. Geography

Dymock is located at the north-western edge of the Forest of Dean District in Gloucestershire. It is right on the borders with Herefordshire and Worcestershire. The best way to describe the location of Dymock might be somewhere in-between; halfway between two old market towns: Ledbury to the north and Newent to the south, both four miles away. It is sandwiched by two distinctive hills; the Malvern Hills to the north and May Hill to the south. Towards the west, there is another rising land mass, Marcle Ridge, which runs north to south. Towards the east there are the Cotswold Hills across the flat Severn plain. The River Severn is about 10 miles to the east, while the River Wye is about 5 miles to the west. Dymock is also inbetween two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB): The Malvern Hills AONB and the Wye Valley AONB¹⁵.

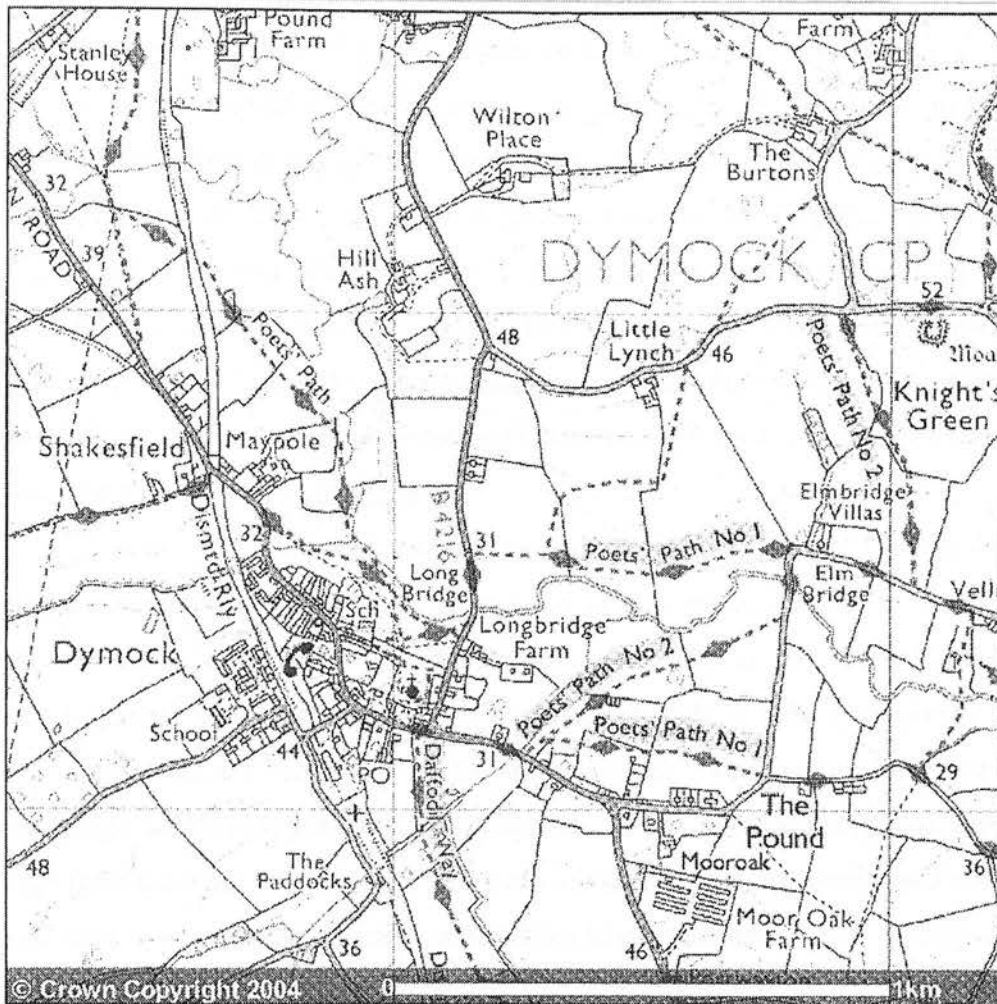
Among those hills and ridges, the most distinctive geographical feature in the area is the May Hill. John Masefield, who was born and brought up in nearby Ledbury, described it in *The Everlasting Mercy*:

I've marked the May Hill ploughman stay
There on his hill, day after day
Driving his team against the sky,
While men and women live and die

The summit of this 1000-ft dome-shaped hill is crowned by a clump of Scots pine which Masefield likened to a giant plough¹⁶.

¹⁵ Because of this 'in-betweenness' and its peripheral location within the municipal boundaries, Dymock tends to be treated as a place of insignificance. A good example of this status is found in its representation on the 1:25,000 large-scale Ordnance Survey maps. Its entire area has never featured on one map. It has always rather been on the edges of several different maps. In the current Explorer series, the area is divided into four separate maps.

¹⁶ These Scots pines were planted to commemorate Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee in 1887. More



Map 2: Dymock

(Reproduction from 2004 Ordnance Survey maps with permission of the controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office, © Crown copyright NC-032004)

Although Dymock is surrounded by hills and ridges, the geographical landscape of Dymock itself is very much like those found in Herefordshire: a gently undulating agrarian landscape created by mixed farming. The English rural landscape is often described as patchwork, which is indeed the case in Dymock, because of its distinctive red-brown clay soil. The contrast between fields covered with red, green or yellow is remarkable. However, the size of each piece of cloth which makes up the whole patchwork is larger than usual. The richness of the soil encourages farmers to

trees were planted to commemorate two other royal celebrations, the Queen's Silver Jubilee in 1977 and the Queen Mother's 80th birth day in 1980 [Street 1994: 17]

cultivate it. Dymock is now predominantly arable country; the size of each field tends to look huge in the eyes of people from Herefordshire. This tendency has accelerated since the 1970s. People remember that a lot of hedges have been removed to introduce more efficient agriculture. Some of the fields were converted to permanent mono-cultural fields. There is a slight difference between the northern half and the southern half of the area. Since the River Leadon runs through the northern half, it is shaped like a shallow undulating valley, while the area to the south of the B4215, which is the main artery of local traffic and runs through the centre of the parish, is rather flat and this area is covered with woodland known as Dymock Wood, maintained by the Forestry Commission.

The parish of Dymock consists of a main village, six other hamlets and scattered farmsteads with cottages which used to be tied to them. It covers about 3000 hectares of land altogether. Unlike other villages in the Welsh Marches, Dymock village has a clear centre with a parish church, a pub, a shop-cum-post office-cum-garage, a Church of England primary school, a bed and breakfast and one more garage¹⁷. The busy B4215 runs through the village. If someone approaches the village from the west, just before entering the village, he will first pass a golf course, which used to be a private country house with a large tythe barn¹⁸. The first block of houses he will see in the village are twenty-two ex-council houses built in the 1960s. A cruck-beam black-and-white thatched cottage will be found almost directly opposite the block of houses. There is another cruck-beam black-and-white thatched cottage, Ye Olde Cottage, on the same side a hundred yards further east. Between these two cottages, on the other side of the road, is the Old Ann Cam School House¹⁹. Next to Ye Olde Cottage there is a recently developed section of twelve 'executive style' houses. Another hundred yards to the east is a garage-cum-post

¹⁷ Dymock used to have two pubs, one bakery, a general shop and the Post Office. However, the bakery and the general shop have gone, and one of the pubs was converted into a private house in 1990.

¹⁸ A previous owner had converted this 16th century country house into a golf course in 1994. It is now owned by an Arab millionaire. The derelict tythe barn is now being restored and will be a restaurant attached to the golf course. The house itself will be renovated and will become a hotel.

¹⁹ This red brick house used to be a local primary school, which was built in 1825 and named after an 18th-century benefactor of the manor of Dymock. The Church of England primary school was moved to the south edge of the village.

office-cum-village shop. Opposite the shop is a small 1970s development of three larger houses and a vicarage. Soon after this, there is a T-junction at the centre. The Old Crown, which used to be a pub but was converted into a private house in 1990, sits at the corner of the junction. At the top of the junction, there is an old village hall which was also converted into a private house. Next to this house is the High House, which used to be a rectory of the parish but was converted into several flats. The Parish church is next. Just like any village in this country, the tower of this Norman church dominates the location. There is a picturesque lichgate on the south side of the church. The green space between this lichgate and the B4215 is Wintour's Green, a village green where a war memorial stands. This green used to be called Beauchamp's Green since the site was donated to the parish by Earl Beauchamp, who was the largest landowner in the area. Wintour is the name of another influential local family in the area. A village pub, the Beauchamp Arms, which stands just next to the church, is also named after Earl Beauchamp²⁰. There is another T-junction right next to the pub where the B4216 lies to the north. The other garage, this one for lorries, is located here. Along the B4216 stands a new village hall right behind the pub. After passing several houses and a cricket ground, both roads lead to the countryside, the B4215 to Newent, the B4216 to Ledbury. The B4216 soon crosses over the River Leadon, which runs alongside the B4215 in this part but is not visible from the road. Both sides of the river are flood plains. Turning at the first T-junction to a road leading south and to the next village, Kempsey, one soon crosses the old railway bridge. The railtrack was dismantled a long time ago, but the old platform is still visible under the bridge. Just next to the old platform there is a nursing home and a 1995 development of fourteen social houses. The Old Police Station stands directly opposite this block, along Kempsey Road. On the other side of the bridge lies a huge arable field. Kempsey Road runs along the western side of this field. The new Ann Cam School is along this road, just at the edge of the village. Next to the school is a 1970s development of council houses. This area is called Bayfield Gardens and is

²⁰ The Beauchamp Arms was also almost converted into a nursing home in the mid-1990s, but the villagers were determined to keep the pub going. As a result the parish council decided to purchase the pub with a loan from the government. Dymock is the first and probably still the only parish in the country to own its own pub.

named after two local families who used to own the field. There is a chapel, which was previously used for railway storage, along a road to Dymock Wood, which runs along the eastern side of the huge field.

The six other hamlets in the parish are Leddington, Greenway, Broom's Green, Tiller's Green, Ryton and Four Oaks. All but Four Oaks, which is at the south-eastern edge of Dymock Wood, are located in the northern half of the parish. Each hamlet has around ten to twenty houses. They no longer have any shops or pubs²¹. Each hamlet is linked to the village by narrow, winding hedged lanes, which also link farms, cottages and country houses scattered all over the area. The contrast between the north and south sections of the area is apparent when one travels along these lanes. Although these hamlets are in relatively close proximity and are physically connected by the lanes, they are reasonably independent of each other.

2.1.2. History

The history of Dymock was written by a then local rector Rev. J. E. Gethyn-Jones (1951, revised in 1985). It goes back to the pre-Roman period. Since the Roman period Dymock has always been on the main route to Wales from Gloucester. The Roman Road is still used as a part of the B4215 and the A417. Gethyn-Jones speculated that Dymock was built upon the lost Roman town of Macatonium²². Whether or not it is true, archaeological excavations have proved that there was a Roman settlement around the church which is built on a little knoll. The Saxons took over the area and made it Royal property. Some hamlets, such as Leddington and Ryton, were probably established during this period. After the Conquest, Dymock was passed to the Normans as Royal property. The Domesday Survey shows that Dymock was one of the largest manors in the Gloucestershire of that period²³. It is the first written historical record of the place. The foundation of the church was

²¹ Until 2000, Broom's Green had a pub, the Horse Shoe, but it was converted to a private house after being one year on the market as a pub.

²² He also surmises that the name Dymock is derived from the Saxon word *Dim* (obscured) and *Mac* (abbreviation of *Macatonium*). Other etymological explanations are *Dim* and another Saxon word *Aac* (oak), and a corruption of Welsh words *Ty* (house) and *Mocher* (swineherd). (1985: 1)

²³ According to the Domesday Survey, Dymock was placed 13th for land value, 6th for cultivation, and 10th for male population in the 543 manors of Gloucestershire (Gethyn-Jones 1985:16).

established in this period, and Dymock had been given the privilege of having markets and fairs by the early 13th century. Dymock was then recognised as a town rather than a village.

Except for a short disturbance during the Civil War and the usual ups and downs, little seems to have happened in this quiet agricultural community. This relative quietness was broken by the arrival of new transport systems which linked Gloucester and Hereford: first by a canal in 1798, and then by a railway in 1885 which replaced the canal. Although Dymock was still a very rural place, it was well connected to towns and cities by this transport network. However, this Great Western Railway line was closed in 1959 for passengers and finally in 1962 for freight services. Soon after, all the tracks were removed. In the late 1950s, the M50, which connects Tewkesbury to Ross-on-Wye, was constructed from the north-east to the south-west of the parish. This motorway is connected to the M5 near Tewksbury, which places Birmingham within one hour's driving distance.

Throughout its history, Dymock has always been an agricultural place. Saxons and Normans are known to have cultivated the land, but in the Middle Ages the emphasis seems to have moved to rearing sheep. The Ryeland sheep, well-known for its high-quality wool, is said to have originated in Dymock²⁴. Fruit growing had taken over by the 18th century and dominated farming in the parish until the post-war era. Apples, pears, plums, greengages, strawberries, raspberries, blackberries, blackcurrants and gooseberries were all grown in Dymock. However, after the Second World War, the shift of the government and European agricultural policy towards staple food production and the introduction of agricultural machinery, which enabled farmers to cultivate heavy clay soil in the area, pushed the orchards out from the landscape. Grain crops and milk production are the dominant type of farming in Dymock now²⁵.

²⁴ Ryeland was one of the manors in the parish of Dymock in the Middle Ages, and is supposed to be somewhere around the present Ryton and Ketford area. During this period, most of the parish consisted of the Cistercian monks of Flexley Abbey who were famous for their sheep and their wool manufacture (Gethyn-Jones 1985: 3-4)

²⁵ However, because of the recent plunge in milk prices, many farmers are now trying to get out from their daily business.

2.1.3. Community

According to the 1991 census data, there were 1286 residents and 498 households in the parish of Dymock²⁶. Of those 1286 residents, 219 (17%) belonged to the 0-15 age group, 779 (60.6%) to the 16-64 age group, and 288 (22.4%) to the 65+ age group. There were only three non-white people in the area.

Apart from agriculture, there is no particular industry in Dymock. It used to be an agricultural community. Although, just like any other part of the country, most of the farms are managed by a few people and seasonal agricultural contractors, according to the 1991 Dymock Parish Appraisal²⁷, 26% of the 390 members of the working population who answered the questionnaire still relied on agriculture in one way or another. However, most of the people in Dymock today commute by car to nearby towns. Although today Dymock has no railway and a poor bus service, the location itself assures good access to major towns, such as Great Malvern, Gloucester and Cheltenham, all of which are within half an hour's driving distance.

The Appraisal also shows that 29.87% of the 714 residents over the age of 11 who answered the questionnaire were brought up in the parish and 20.49% were brought up within 10 miles of Dymock. The people who fall into these two categories are generally regarded as the 'locals'²⁸. Since the Appraisal depended on voluntary responses actual figures are assumed to be smaller than those appearing in the appraisal. The rest of the population is regarded as the 'incomers'²⁹. Conflict between the 'locals' and the 'incomers' is a classic topic of rural community studies in Britain. Some of the comments in the Appraisal reveal that Dymock is not an exempt from this problem:

²⁶ A boundary change in 1992 amalgamated one of the hamlets in Dymock, Bromesberrow Heath, with an adjoining parish, Bromesberrow. According to the Forest of Dean mid-1999 population estimates, the population of Dymock was reduced to 1121. At the time of writing this thesis, other corrected figures are not yet available. The population in Dymock decreased in the 1950s from 1272 in 1951 to 1212 in 1961, but it has gradually increased since then to 1230 in 1971 and 1269 in 1981.

²⁷ The Appraisal was produced by volunteer members of the resident population of Dymock.

²⁸ However, the people who fall into the second category tend to refer themselves as 'incomers', or refer to themselves as 'the locals' with some reservations.

²⁹ The appraisal divided them into four categories, namely those who came from the rural area 11 to 30 miles from Dymock, from the rural area over 30 miles away, from the urban area 11 to 30 miles, and from the urban area over 30 miles.

- People with money move into the village pushing people and their ideas who have lived here for over forty years into back seats.
- Parish councillors should endeavour to obtain the views of people who have resided in the village for many years rather than the views of organised groups of newcomers.
- I think Dymock is a nice village but it will be ruined if more outsiders keep moving here trying to tell us how to change the village.

Indignation was expressed only from the 'locals' in the appraisal, and their complaints focused mainly on the issue of housing:

- We need some form of low-cost housing for young people. Some people move into the village and build expensive houses which local people cannot afford on the wages in this area.
- If any building is permitted it should be for first-time buyers to encourage young people to stay in the village and avoid it becoming an O.A.P's and 'yuppie' district.
- Do not allow executive housing to be built.

Increasing numbers of in-migrants inevitably contribute to the change in the character of the locality which used to be a predominantly agricultural community. Again some comments in the Appraisal demonstrate this:

- Farmers should make contribution to the magazine [parish magazine]
- Monthly letter telling us what a typical farmer would be doing on the farm. This would help non-farming folk to know what was going on. [comments on the parish magazine]

We will return to this local/incomer issue later. Before that, however, I will describe the distinctive character of the place.

2.2 Character

This area, including Dymock, used to be known as fruit-growing country, and was known especially for its apple and pear trees. Apples were grown for cider, and pears for perry. By the 18th century, fruit growing was a major industry in Dymock, and was continuously so until the mid-20th century when farmers started to convert the orchards to arable fields. Although cider making is still a thriving industry in neighbouring Much Marcle, which has a well-known cider maker, it was a thing of the past in Dymock in economic terms. However, it is still possible to find small orchards here and there in the parish. Additionally it is very common to find old

apple or pear trees with an old cider mill in the gardens of old houses.

However, what makes Dymock distinctive from other places is its daffodils. Dymock has always been associated with its wild daffodils blooming abundantly in woods and meadows, transforming them into a yellow carpet. The daffodils even created a seasonal industry in the parish in the early 20th century³⁰. People in Dymock used to pick daffodils and send them all over the country through the railway network. This cottage industry allowed people to earn extra income from the land³¹. Then the Great Western Railway increased its service in spring for that purpose; the service was called the 'Daffodil Express'. The Daffodil Express also brought people from the town into Dymock. As poet laureate John Masefield described them in his poem:

And there the pickers come, picking for town
Those dancing daffodils; all day they pick;

Although the number of wild daffodils was significantly reduced as a result of many of meadows being ploughed up, Dymock in daffodil season is still literally packed with people mainly from nearby counties, who come for the famous flowers.

Although this Dymock-daffodils link is still strong enough to attract people to this part of the countryside where otherwise there is hardly any reason to come, people started to associate this place with something other than daffodils in the 1990s. 'Poets and poetry' became the new face of the place. I first came across the name of the place, Dymock, through this poets connection. It was about two months after I settled down in Malvern that I had a chat with my new friends there. The topic of the conversation was about people and place. They mentioned various things, from the geographical landscape (the hills and the view from those hills) to natural resources (water), local history (the Victorian era), language (the local accent) and cultural figures (Elgar, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, and so on). After talking about the Malvern area for a while, one of them suddenly mentioned Dymock: 'Have you ever

³⁰ In the Middle Ages, daffodils were cultivated to make dyes (Clark 1992: 10)

³¹ One of the residents described the 'season' in those days: 'At this time normal household routines were suspended and it was literally daffs for breakfast, dinner, tea and supper. In fact you were lucky

heard of Dymock?'. I had never heard of it before. She continued, 'It's outside of Malvern, but very interesting place. A group of poets used to live there. I have a book somewhere.' She came back with the book on the poets, which I borrowed and left unread for more than half a year. My friends also mentioned daffodils and suggested I go there in the spring. Both are retired college lecturers who moved into the area in the mid-1980s. They might have presented Dymock as a poets' place because of my presence and interest, or perhaps their intellectual background made them do so. But since then I have heard the same presentation of Dymock from several other people: Dymock as a poets' place.

I carried out a quick simple street survey in the nearby town of Ledbury. I stood at two different points on the high street at lunchtime over two days, and asked a simple question, 'What does Dymock remind you of?', to 50 randomly chosen people each day³². On Day 1, 15 people mentioned 'poets', followed by 14 'nothing in particular' answers. Only three people mentioned 'daffodils'. On Day 2, 12 people gave 'poets', which was one vote behind 'nothing in particular' answers. There were five 'daffodils' answers that day. The sample is very small and the survey is very simple. But still this result seems, to a certain extent, to demonstrate people's current image of Dymock. There is no equivalent data to compare in the past. However, if someone had conducted a similar survey 10 years ago, he would not have heard the 'poets' answer. To understand this emergence of the new image of the place, we have to examine the past 20 years' history of Dymock and Ledbury. But before that, I would like to examine this group of poets now known as 'the Dymock Poets'.

to escape dreaming of them!' (Dudfield n.d.: 39)

³² The survey was conducted on 24th and 25th September, in front of the Market Place and St.Catherine's Hall. The answers are below (some gave more than one answer):

Day 1 (33 female, 17 male): 1) poets 15, 2) nothing particular 14, 3) small village, etc 13, 4) daffodils 3, 5) personal relations [my uncle lives there, etc], pub owned by the parish council, treacle mind, cricket, 1 each, 6) others 6 (apple and plum, cricket, walking, flood, I don't know)

Day 2 (33 female, 17 male): 1) nothing particular 13, 2) poets 12, 3) small village, etc 10, 4) personal relations 7, 5) daffodils 5, 6) church 2, 7) pub owned by the parish council, black and white cottage, treacle mind, cricket, 1 each, 8) others 3 (countryside, animals, school)

2.3 Dymock Poets³³

In the 1910s, just before the outbreak of the First World War, a group of young poets flocked to Dymock. Some lived there for a while, others just visited. None stayed in Dymock more than six years. These poets were Lascelles Abercrombie, Wilfrid Gibson, Robert Frost, Edward Thomas, John Drinkwater and Rupert Brooke. The first four poets lived in rented cottages for various lengths of time; the rest were visitors. Although they are all regarded as the Georgian poets³⁴, they were not a self-proclaimed group per se, nor did they share the same styles or ideas. What they shared was a fondness for country life and friendship, which drew these poets to Dymock one after another. Some of them are believed to have spent the most productive or crucial time of their careers as poets in Dymock.

This short-lived colony of poets in a rather unusual location was started by Lascelles Abercrombie (1881-1938). He was then a popular poet and playwright, but now few people recognise his name. He was born in Cheshire but was educated at the public school in Malvern, and had a sister who married a gentleman farmer in Much Marcle. Malvern is about 10 miles north of Dymock and Much Marcle is the village adjacent to Dymock. He had a personal connection to the area. What he also had was a longing for a rural idyll, which was not unusual in this period when rural writing established itself as a distinctive genre in literature. After graduating from a college in Manchester, he worked first as a clerk in a quantity surveyor's office and then as a book reviewer for several newspapers while he wrote poems privately in the city of Manchester. However, his mind seems to have been in the country. He wrote to his fiancée: 'It is the proper thing for us... to be together in the country. We are not

Respondents were predominantly middle aged.

³³ This section is based on previous works on the Dymock Poets: (Keith 1992), (Street 1994), (Hart 2000).

³⁴ 'Georgian' here refers to the reign of George V (1910-36). This usage was invented by Edward Marsh, who was a patron of poets in this period and a private secretary to Winston Churchill, when he ventured out to publish an anthology of young poets. He named it *Georgian Poetry, 1911-12* which turned out to be a huge success. The distinctive character of Georgian poetry is its simplicity and warm lyricism written in vernacular language. Another common theme for the Georgians was a celebration of Englishness and the English countryside. This pursuit of the rural idyll brought the poets to Dymock. Although because of Marsh's strict qualification of British living poets Frost's and Thomas's works were not included in any of the anthologies, they share these features. (Reeves 1962: xi-xxiii)

townsfolk, either of us. We belong to the earth. I do hope I shall so be able to order my life that we can live, really live in the country' (Hart 2000: 18). A few years after writing this letter, his sister found a cottage for them in Much Marcle, so they moved there in 1910. Settling down in the area very well, they moved to a larger cottage, The Gallows, at Ryton, one of the hamlets in Dymock, a year later. He later described his feelings at that time in his autobiographical essay: 'Here I am in a cottage in Gloucestershire, living the life (or very nearly) I have always wanted to live' ... 'I was my own man and living at last in the country! - yes and to crown all, living in that county which is the best part of the most English part of England!' (Gawsworth 1932, quoted in Clark 1992: 24). Although financially he struggled, his 1911 poem *The Sale of St Thomas* was very well received.

Probably encouraged by Abercrombie's success as a poet in the country, his friend Wilfrid Gibson (1878-1962) came to Dymock in 1913. He and his new wife first stayed at The Gallows for their honeymoon, and soon after that rented a cottage, The Old Nailshop, at Greenway, another hamlet in Dymock. Gibson was born in Northumberland and had worked as a book reviewer and as an editor in London where he met Abercrombie. He was known as a poet of everyday life. He wrote about the life of both the urban and the rural poor. He became a very popular poet in the 1920s, especially in America, but few people would recognise his name nowadays.

Prior to his moving to Dymock, Gibson and Abercrombie had discussed the possibility of publishing a poetry magazine. This project brought two more poets to Dymock, namely John Drinkwater and Rupert Brooke.

Drinkwater (1882-1937) was known more as an actor and as a playwright for the Birmingham Repertory Theatre than as a poet. He was born in Essex and had worked in the Midlands. He first visited The Gallows in 1911 to see the poet he admired, after which he frequently came to Dymock from Birmingham either to spend a holiday or to discuss the magazine. Although he did not live in the country during this period, he had a great passion for the countryside which later drew him to the nearby Cotswolds to settle down.

Another visitor, Rupert Brooke (1887-1915), is well known as a romantic war hero of the nation. He is remembered for three things: his physical beauty, his

tragic death and one of his war sonnets, *The Soldier*. The sonnet was written in an army camp in Dorset but was first published in the Dymock poetry magazine, which is one of the reasons that he is counted as a Dymock Poet although he actually visited Dymock only twice, for a few days each time, to discuss the magazine. Another reason is his close connection to Abercrombie and Gibson. He wrote a will on his way to the Dardanelles to bequeath his inheritance and royalties to them along with Walter de la Mare.

The name of the quarterly poetry magazine they published in Dymock was *New Numbers*. The magazine published nothing but the four poets' works. The first issue was published in February 1914, and was well received in both commercial and literary terms. The magazine was published successfully but, because of war time shortages and Brooke's death, issue 4 in January 1915 turned out to be the last one³⁵.

In addition to this *New Numbers* group, there are two more poets who were associated with Dymock. One is the then-obscure American poet, Robert Frost (1874-1963), who came to England to publish his poems which had not had any success in America. Following a toss-up which had selected England rather than Canada, he came to England with his family in 1912 and first settled in a newly created suburban village of London, Beaconsfield near the Chilterns. He successfully published his first book, *A Boy's Will*, while he lived there. It was when he sought a chance to publish his second book, *North of Boston*, that he met Gibson, who introduced him to Abercrombie. They became close friends, and Gibson and Abercrombie urged Frost to come to Dymock to join them in appreciating the real English countryside. He took this advice and moved to Dymock in April 1914. He first stayed in The Gallows and then rented a cottage in the hamlet of Leddington. The black-and-white farm labourer's cottage is called Little Iddens.

The last of the six poets is Edward Thomas (1878-1917). Although he had already established his reputation as an astute literary critic, biographer and rural writer, he had not written even one piece of poetry before Dymock days. He was born

³⁵ Of the four poets, Brooke was the least known at the time of publication. Ironically, however, probably the only reason the magazine is still remembered today is that it first published Brooke's *The Soldier* in its last issue. Just before Brooke's death Dean Inge of St. Paul's cathedral read it at Easter mass, and just after his death Churchill wrote a letter to *The Times* to praise the sonnet, which instantly created a huge demand for the issue.

in London and lived in Hampshire. He had known all five poets, but it was Frost who brought Thomas to Dymock. Their deep friendship is well-known. They first met in London in 1913 and rapidly established a sincere friendship. Thomas had come to Dymock three times in 1914 between April and July, and then rented rooms in a farmhouse called Oldfield for a whole month in August with his family. Oldfield stands three fields across Little Iddens.

As explained above, they were not a solid group united through particular purposes or causes. The group was formed contingently in the loosest possible way, so that some of them barely had a relationship with others. For instance, Drinkwater barely knew Frost and Thomas. However, others forged close relationships with each other. They visited each others' cottages frequently on foot. Abercrombie, Frost and Thomas in particular were known as keen walkers. They spent considerable time walking around the Dymock area from the Malvern Hills to May Hill. Frost wrote to his friend in America:

We are on a lane where no automobiles come. We can go almost anywhere we wish on wavering footpaths through the fields. The fields are so small and the trees so numerous along the hedges that, as my friend Thomas says in the loveliest book on spring in England, you may think from a little distance that the country was solid wood. (a letter to Sidney Cox on 18/5/1914 in Frost 1965: 124, also quoted in Clark 1992: 63)

They walked along narrow lanes and through the fields in Dymock, and climbed surrounding hills. It was Edward Thomas who wrote about the walks around Dymock both in prose and in verse:

The sun used to shine while we two walked
Slowly together, paused and started
Again, and sometimes mused, sometimes talked
As either pleased, and cheerfully parted

Each night. We never disagreed
Which gate to rest on. The to be
And the late past we gave small heed.
We turned from men or poetry
[from *The Sun Used to Shine*]

IT WAS a part of the country I had never known before, and I had no connections with it. ... Three meadows away lived a friend, and once or twice or three times a day I used to cross the meadows, the gate, and the two stiles.... How easy it was to spend a morning or afternoon in walking over to this house, stopping to talk to whoever was about for a few minutes, and then strolling with my friend, nearly regardless of footpaths, in a long loop, so as to end either at his house or my lodging. It was mostly orchard and grass, gently up and down, seldom steep for more than a few yards. Some

of the meadows had a group or line of elms; one an ash rising out of an islet of dense brambles; many had several great old apple or pear trees. The pears were small brown perry pears, as thick as haws, the apples chiefly cider apples, innumerable, rosy and uneatable ... If talk dwindled in the traversing of a big field, the pause at gate or stile braced it again. Often we prolonged the pause, whether we actually sat or not, and we talked - of flowers, childhood, Shakespeare, women, England, the war [from *This England*, Thomas 1914]

It is said that during these walks Frost 'bantered, teased and bullied' Thomas to write poetry. The walk also inspired Frost to produce one of his most popular poems, *The Road Not Taken*, which was written to tease Thomas about his habit of regretting not having taken other routes in order to give Frost more interesting walks in Dymock.

Their relationship with local people is relatively unknown. One local lady remembered that some of the poets played with local children. The Abercrombies and the Gibsons, as relatively long residents, seemed to have had regular contact with nearby farmers and gentries. However they generally appeared to have been treated in a suspicious way. Probably because of their rather unusual status of 'incomers' who did not work on the land, and also because of the time, just before and at the beginning of the war, they were suspected of being enemy spies. Frost complained in his letter that locals kept watching him and some threw stones at his window. Both Frost and Thomas were visited by the police as a result of several anonymous letters presumably written by the locals. They were also threatened at gunpoint by a gamekeeper while they walked on a footpath in the Beauchamp estate.

The poets wrote both about the Dymock countryside and about on each other. However, their Dymock days were short-lived. Even the resident of the longest standing of their time spent in Dymock, Abercrombie, lived there for only five years. The ephemeral nature was caused by the war. Brooke enlisted in September 1914 and died of blood poisoning on his way to join Constantinople action; he was buried on the hilltop of the Greek island of Skyros in April 1915. His death and the prophetic poem instantly made him a national hero. The Frosts sailed back to America in February 1915 just before the German blockade came into effect. Back in America, Frost gradually built up his reputation to such an extent that he was known as the national poet. After the summer in Dymock with Frost, Thomas started writing poetry in November, but he enlisted in July 1915 and was killed by the blast of a shell at Arras in April 1917. However he produced around 170 poems during that

time, which established his reputation in English literary history. He came to Dymock three more times, once before and twice after the Frosts' departure. The last visit was only a week before he was mobilised to France. Abercrombie volunteered to work in a munitions factory in Liverpool after being rejected from the army several times because of his poor health in March 1916. He abandoned poetry altogether after the war and became an academic. He successively held professorship at Liverpool, Leeds, London, and Oxford universities. The last poet in Dymock, Gibson, also moved out of the area in October 1916. He also enlisted and spent the last few months at the front. He came back and enjoyed popularity in the 1920s which, however, gradually declined during the remainder of his life.

After this short period of time, none of them came back to live in Dymock. Abercrombie and Gibson visited Dymock several times, as did Frost when he returned to England both in 1928 and in 1957. His 1957 return trip, when he came to England to collect honorary degrees from Oxford, Cambridge and Durham, is well recorded. He asked to arrange another visit to Dymock within his busy schedule. Accompanied by a local vicar, the Rev. Gethyn-Jones, he and a group of journalists visited the three cottages in Dymock: The Old Nailshop, Little Iddens and The Gallows. He entered the first two cottages, though with apparent hesitation at Little Iddens, and talked with the then occupiers. When he arrived at Little Iddens he first went into the field which connected Little Iddens to Oldfield and saw the cottage from there. He did not get into Oldfield, although he passed just in front of its doorstep. The last cottage, the Gallows, had by this time crumbled into ruins.

Most of the poets stayed in Dymock for a very short period of time: Thomas about a month, Frost a year, Gibson about three years, Abercrombie five years. Thomas's wife, Helen, described the time as 'a poets' holiday in the shadow of the war'. However, some of the best known poems in English were written in relation to this place or period, such as Brooke's *The Soldier*, Frost's *The Road Not Taken*, and Thomas's *Adlestrop*³⁶. They came to Dymock in search of a rural idyll. They lived,

³⁶ *The Soldier*, as part of his 1914 sonnets, was written especially for *New Numbers* in response to the request made by Abercrombie and Gibson. As regards *Adlestrop*, this much loved evocative poem is not, of course, about Dymock, but it was on the way to Dymock in June 1914 that the train happened to stop at Adlestrop, which gave Thomas the inspiration to write this poem.

walked around, found inspiration in this countryside and then departed.

2.4 Interaction with local history

2.4.1 The pre-1980s period

For a long time this little episode in English literary history had been half-forgotten, although not entirely. A Gloucestershire solicitor and friend of the poets wrote a series of articles about them in a local newspaper in the 1930s³⁷. Later, when a vicar in Dymock wrote a history of the parish, *Dymock Down the Ages*, in 1951, he devoted one chapter to the poets³⁸. Here he described the poets as 'the Dymock Poets'. This book appeared to stimulate an interest in the poets both nationally and locally. An article on the poets appeared in *Country Life*, a long established guardian of traditional rural life, in 1955.

There is a pilgrimage well worth making in this deep country round Dymock, though few make it today. This unspoilt unchanged Gloucestershire borderland of scattered hamlets was for a time a hermitage of poets: and poets go well with daffodils ... They belong to the old, stable world before the First World War and nowhere else can you match this colony³⁹

In 1957, when Frost came back to England for the second time since he had left for America to receive the honorary degrees, he revisited Dymock. Some of the old people in Dymock remembered this event, which was widely reported in both local and national newspapers⁴⁰.

Probably as a result of these two events, local primary schools began

³⁷ John Wilton Hines, who was a member of a well-established legal and medical family in Gloucester, wrote three essays in *the Gloucester Journal*; *Wilfrid Gibson* (15/12/1934), *Lascelles Abercrombie* (12/1/1935), *Robert Frost* (2/2/1935), *Edward Thomas* (16/2/1935), and one in *Gloucestershire Countryside*; *The Dymock Poets* (October 1933). His 1933 essay seems to be the first example of the description of the poets as a group and the use of the term 'the Dymock Poets' (Hart 2000: 15).

³⁸ (Gethyn-Jones 1951). The title of Chapter 7 is 'Dymock Personalities and Poets'.

³⁹ E.E. Kirby "Associations of a river" in *the Country Life* 31/3/1955

⁴⁰ The vicar, J.E. Gethyn-Jones, who accompanied Frost, added this event to the 1966 revised edition of *Dymock Down the Ages* in his typically sentimental tone.

Slowly he entered the 'Golden Room' where, in the distant past, he had held the silent circle spellbound. Within that room, the central meeting-place of their fellowship, Frost was strangely silent. Did the shades speak to him? Did a laughing voice echo across land and sea from that Aegean Isle where Brooke's body rests? Did Frost hear again the measured phrase of Thomas from the Virmy Ridge? In his imagination were they all there, those whom he knew so well and loved so dear? Who knows? Outside that room he talked freely of the Gibsons and of Rupert Brooke, Drinkwater and the others (pp.115-16)

teaching classes on the poets as part of local history. Thus, people in Dymock have for several generations been aware of the poets, but it has been dormant local knowledge.

2.4.2 Festivals

Things started to change three decades after the publication of *Dymock Down the Ages*. Rev. Reg Legg, another vicar of Dymock, triggered off a series of events which raised people's awareness of the poets and eventually changed the image of the place.

When he arrived in Dymock in 1980, attendance at his service was poor. He also realised that the community in Dymock was split into two groups, that is, the indigenous locals and the in-migrants who had started to move into the area in the 1970s. There was little communication between them, and sometimes even mild conflict. He felt it necessary to create an opportunity to solve these problems. Thus, he organised a fund-raising flower show, 'Four Churches in Glorious Bloom', in 1982⁴¹. His aim was to create an opportunity in which various people could work together. Looking through the local history to find a theme for the show, he came across the Dymock Poets, and became especially interested in the friendship between Frost and Thomas. He decided to highlight this little episode at the event, the aim of which was to integrate people. Reg asked one of the newcomers, Caroline, who used to be an art teacher, to make a small exhibition of the Dymock Poets as part of the event, and put it on display in a corner of the church. He had contacted the British Museum and the remaining relatives of the poets, and collected material for the display, which included photographs, books and letters of the poets. Many people turned up at the event, but in terms of integration, it made little impact. However, some of the older people in Dymock began to give Reg their personal memories of the poets.

Three years later, in 1985, Reg organised another fund-raising event on a larger scale. This one-year-long event was named 'Dymock 900' in honour of the 900th anniversary of the first record of Dymock in the Domesday Book. His intention

⁴¹The vicar of Dymock at that time was in charge of four parishes: Dymock, Preston, Kempsey and Donnington. Each parish has its own church. The vicar is now in charge of nine parishes and is based at Redmarley D'Abitot. The vicarage at Dymock has been sold.

was to raise the awareness of the community by celebrating its long history. In the posters prepared for the events, the aim was clearly emphasised.

Reg discovered that despite all the modern forms of communication, his 'flock' were not communicating or interacting in a meaningful way... His plan was to focus on the first recorded community of Dymock in 1085 - 900 years ago.

The primary mission of the parish church is identified as the search for ways to make every residents call this place home in the terms of Robert Frost's poem

Home is the place where, when you have to go there

They have to take you in

I should have called it

Something you haven't somehow to deserve

The rural dream is based on a memory of what was possible in an agricultural community ... but ... the new village dwellers share no common background.
How shall they belong?

Various programmes were organised on a monthly basis. They began with BBC Radio 4's *Bells on Sunday* programme broadcast from Dymock in the January, followed by concerts, dramatic productions, art exhibitions, lectures, a craft show, a horticultural show, a carnival, sports events, discos, picnics, feasts, a pageant, guided walks and so on. There were three to fifteen events each month. The event was closed by another BBC broadcast, *Any Questions?*, in December.

As part of 'Dymock 900', Reg and Caroline created another exhibition on the Dymock Poets, based on the previous one. Since the 1982 event, Reg had

continued to collect material relating to the Dymock Poets and to contact surviving relatives. The poets' exhibition was staged at the corner of the church throughout the event. He also commissioned a drama about the friendship between Frost and Thomas for a London-based actress and writer, Ann Harvey. The work 'Elected Friends' was performed to a packed Dymock church in the October as the almost final event of 'Dymock 900'⁴². In addition, a lecture entitled 'Faith and Poetry' was given by a dean of King's College London. Caroline drew pictorial maps of the parish for the event, in which names of the poets were placed among other features of the parish⁴³. The third edition of Gethyn Jones' *Dymock Down the Ages*, which had

⁴² Harvey's partner is a nephew of Eleanor Farjeon who was a close friend of Edward Thomas and who stayed in Dymock while he was there. The script was later published.

⁴³ The following year, Caroline attended the Rural Development Conference held in nearby Cheltenham as a representative of the Dymock Parochial Church Commission. The conference was

been out of print for some time, was published for the event. Thus the Dymock Poets were mentioned in various events throughout the year. After this event the Parochial Church Commission decided to leave the exhibition at the church as a permanent exhibition. This event raised the awareness of the Dymock Poets among all local residents, regardless of their background.



Plate 3: Dymock Poets' exhibition at Dymock church

2.4.3 Footpaths

In the same year, Simon, a policy director of the then Countryside Commission⁴⁴, moved into Dymock. At that time, the Countryside Commission started a campaign to restore the public rights of way network in England and Wales by the year 2000 to

organised by Gloucestershire Rural Community Council. In the conference, a representative of an influential charitable organisation, Common Ground, gave a lecture which urged people to make a pictorial map of their own parishes. Caroline, who had already made one for 'Dymock 900' without knowing of Common Ground, contacted them after the lecture. Later her Dymock map was featured in their newsletter as a good example of a parish pictorial map. Common Ground will be described in Chapter 4.

⁴⁴ The Countryside Commission was amalgamated with the Rural Development Commission in 1999, and changed its name to the Countryside Agency. Its headquarters has always been in Cheltenham.

meet increasing public demand for countryside walks. Simon checked the condition of local footpaths in and around Dymock, and found they were in a very poor condition. It was virtually impossible to walk on most of the paths. There were few signs, stiles or bridges. Some parts were overgrown, others were ploughed up. They had long been neglected and were difficult to recognise. He wanted to restore these long-neglected footpaths around Dymock, and put a notice in *The Windcross Magazine*, a local parish magazine, to see if there were any local people interested in the footpath issue. Half a dozen people responded to the notice, and they met at Simon's house and agreed on three objectives.

- 1) To get the public paths to a state where they are fully open; well-marked and accessible to the public
- 2) To inform residents and visitors about the public paths network and the opportunities it presents
- 3) To gain the goodwill and co-operation of farmers and local authorities in order to achieve these objectives

Consequently Simon approached the local authorities, firstly to the Dymock parish council, to which he proposed the restoration of the footpaths at a parish council meeting. The council, however, was not very keen on the idea. Most of the councillors were locals who tended to represent farming interests, which could be compromised by this proposed footpath restoration. However, the Forest of Dean District Council became interested in the idea, since they had just started a circular footpath community program. They introduced him to the Manpower Service Commission, which provided a voluntary workforce to community activities. He also found that the Gloucestershire County Council was supportive of the idea and they could provide stile kits. As an employee of the Countryside Commission, he knew that his project could be eligible for a grant from the Commission. With this back-up, he proposed the idea again at the AGM of the parish council in spring, 1986. This time the idea was rather reluctantly accepted, on the condition that it would not cost the parish council anything, either in terms of cost or labour.

Under Simon's leadership, around a dozen people gathered together to start the restoration project in July. Most of them were incomers who worked in public services, such as local authorities and schools. They named the project, and also the

group itself, the Windcross Public Paths Project (WPPP)⁴⁵. The WPPP first surveyed the condition of the footpaths and found that 95 out of a total of 120 separate paths (approximately 50 miles altogether) in the area were not suitable for walking on, for one reason or another⁴⁶. There were only six signposts, and 150 stiles needed replaced. They also found that farmers and landowners had not been informed about the project very well. To tackle this problem, they sent a letter to around 80 farmers and landowners in the area to invite them to a meeting to discuss the issue. Approximately 20 of them responded and came to a meeting in January 1987. After a 'lively' discussion, the local group of the National Farmers' Union agreed to send two representatives to the WPPP to co-operate with the project, and several farmers offered help informally after the meeting. The WPPP also took a representative of the Ramblers' Association to get a balance. A footpath officer of the Gloucestershire County Council and two parish councillors also joined the WPPP.

Following the Countryside Commission's and the Forest of Dean District Council's policies, the WPPP planned to create several circular footpath routes. In order to attract walkers, they decided to base those routes on local themes. They immediately agreed to adopt daffodils and the Dymock Poets as the themes and arranged the routes along points of interest. They planned to make three circular routes, one walk for daffodils and two others for the poets. All three of the walks start from Dymock church.

Around a year later, in April 1988, the first of the three routes, the Daffodil Way, was completed. This 10-mile circular route covers the southern half of the Windcross area. It starts from and comes back to Dymock church via the village of Kempley and through Dymock Wood. Caroline made an A3-sized illustrated route map, in which the country code and farmers' requests were written to warn walkers not to disturb farming practice or to stray from the public footpath. This project enjoyed rather a lot of publicity since the Countryside Commission took it as a model case of revitalising a public right of way. At the opening of the Daffodil Way, both a

⁴⁵ Because the three parishes of Dymock, Kempley and Donnington meet at a junction called Windcross, they are collectively called Windcross.

⁴⁶ 50% of the paths were covered with crops in the summer and the same paths were ploughed up in the autumn, and another 30% were overgrown.

then chairman of the Commission and a then chairman of the Forest of Dean District Council came to open it in front of around 120 people. The event was covered by several local papers.

The following year saw the opening of the second route, the Poets' Path I, which starts from and comes back to the church via the hamlet of Ryton, where the Abercrombies used to live, the village of Redmarley D'Abitot and the hamlet of Ketford. The poets are known to have walked through woodlands inside this eight-mile circular route. Caroline again produced an illustrated route map, in which a brief but detailed history of the poets is written. At the end of the description, it is emphasised that the landscape which the poets appreciated and walked through has been kept virtually intact and could be re-experienced.

Despite changes in farming practice, much of the landscape they knew remains in all its beauty. We can still enjoy the privilege of walking in their footsteps.

It also quotes Gethyn-Jones's phrase from *Dymock Down the Ages*:

They walked these lanes, these fields, these woods. They sought the first primrose on Hazard bank, the early daffodil in the frail bluebell amongst the Ryton Firs.

The Poets' Path I was followed by the Poets' Path II in 1990. Another eight-mile circular route from the church goes north-west to the hamlet of Leddington, where the Frosts and the Thomases used to live, and then to another hamlet, Greenway, where the Gibsons lived. After passing the village of Broom's Green, it returns to its starting point. This, the most popular route of the three, covers three cottages where the poets used to live. On Caroline's map there are brief descriptions of each cottage, and it is mentioned that the poets frequently walked in the area:

The Dymock poets were all keen walkers, exploring the local countryside and commuting on foot between each other's houses by paths and lanes.

It then quotes Frost's comment on footpaths and fields, mentioned above.

Both Poets' Paths were opened by Edward Eastaway Thomas, a nephew of the poet. The opening was featured by BBC Radio 4's *Kaleidoscope* programme, in which local people talked about the Dymock Poets with Sean Street, a poet and

presenter of the programme.

Caroline's illustrated maps of each route have been very popular, have thus been reprinted several times, and are still available in Dymock and in tourist information centres in nearby towns. A local bus company promotes the route by organising coach tours, and the WPPP successfully persuaded the Ordnance Survey to indicate the routes on the 1:25000-scale OS maps. They are thus clearly indicated on the maps with their names. Since 1994, the WPPP has organised a four- to seven-mile guided walking tour for the public once a month throughout the year.

However, they did not achieve this without encountering any problems. They met rather strong resistance from some farmers and landowners. In a magazine interview, Simon commented 'There is too much confrontation, and you need to convince them [farmers and landowners] that it is in their interest' (*Countryside Walker* May 1988). Although these landed interests were indignant and vocal, with the law and the authorities, both central and local, on their side, the WPPP opened up these three footpath routes which covered the whole parishes, linking points of local historical interest, especially those relating to the poets.

2.4.4. School

In 1991, local schoolchildren performed a poetry reading with visiting American children at the church for a public audience. The performance was entitled 'Friends Across Time', in which the children read the poems written by the Dymock Poets. Since 'Dymock 900' and the creation of the paths, the local schools increased their teaching of local history, especially the poets. They have also organised a walking tour on the newly created paths. Many young, especially recently in-migrated, parents told me that they learned about the poets through their children.

2.4.5. Books

Independently of these local efforts, Keith Clark, a freelance journalist, wrote *The Muse Colony: Rupert Brooke, Edward Thomas, Robert Frost and Friends, Dymock 1914*, a book on the Dymock Poets, in 1992. According to its preface, he happened to pull over his car in Dymock quite unexpectedly, and found the poets' exhibition in

the church, which led him to make further enquiries on the topic and then to write the book.

Two years later, Sean Street, the poet who presented the *Kaleidoscope* programme on the poets' paths, wrote another book on the Dymock Poets. *The Dymock Poets* was published in 1994. After telling the story of the poets, he closed the book with the following passage:

Modern weekend walkers still explore the lands between Ryton and Greenway, and cross the fields that Frost and Thomas walked, now along well planned country footpaths, picking their way through the wild daffodils in spring, and perhaps, although they may not admit it, listen occasionally for the hint of a continuing presence somewhere just around the next bend, something persisting from those days. Landscape fed the poets; does their poetry now perhaps inform this landscape? Or then again is it just the place whispering to us as it did to them? Certainly walking through the meadows of Dymock today it is not difficult to recall that Edward Thomas once predicted our very presence here, as he passed in quiet conversation along this same path in 1914, musing on a presentiment of how one day far from his own, others would tread in his footsteps. [Street 1994: 155]

Their books are still available in bookshops in nearby towns.

2.4.6. Little Iddens

On the poets' routes, cottages where the poets used to live became points of interest. The routes had in fact been planned to run near the cottages. A black-and-white cottage, Little Iddens, in Leddington where the Frosts stayed is one of them. This 17th-century grade II listed cottage had belonged to a local farming family for a long time without changing hands, and they had rented it out to various people after the Frosts, before it was converted into a holiday cottage in the 1960s. By 1990, however, it had been long neglected and reduced to a sorry state. Jeffrey Meyers, a biographer of Robert Frost, described the condition of the cottage at that time:

Their 16th century [sic] cottage, built in Shakespeare's time, still exists - building collapsing, propped up by structural supports and decorated with 'Danger: Keep Out' signs. Cross-timbered with whitewashed brick, a single roof and leaded window panes, it was attractive but uncomfortable. The kitchen was tiny, the staircase narrow, the ceilings low, the stove old-fashioned, the water pump and lavatory outside the house. But it was down a quiet lane, surrounded by fruit orchards, and had a fine view to the south of May Hill. (1996: 111)

The WPPP expressed its concerns but did not take any action since its main purpose was to maintain the footpath. Most members of the WPPP thought it too much to intervene regarding the condition of the private property. However, some of them

found it hard to turn a blind eye. One of them was Ruth, who lived just outside of Dymock and worked for the local Records Office. She and Caroline set up the Little Iddens Trust, with several literary figures in Cheltenham and Gloucester, such as a rural writer P. J. Kavanagh, to put pressure on the owner to restore the cottage and also to commemorate the Dymock Poets. However, the restoration of a listed building would have been costly, so the family left it to decay. The trust proposed purchasing the cottage and converting it into a personality museum of the Gloucestershire County Council and the Forest of Dean District Council, but the councils were not interested in the idea. So the trust could do nothing but monitor the situation.



Plate 4: Little Iddens and a footpath in the field from Oldfield where the Thomases stayed

In 1993, when part of the cottage finally collapsed and a row occurred in the family, it was rumoured that they were planning to sell the cottage. Ruth and Caroline called several meetings in Dymock to discuss the situation. At the third meeting held in August, just before the owner put the cottage up for sale by auction, an American woman, who had moved to Ledbury by chance only two weeks before

joined the group and she changed the situation drastically. This very vocal and charismatic woman, Marion, immediately took charge of the group. After reading environmental politics at Oxford, she worked for the Ramblers Association as a press secretary and edited its magazine. She therefore knew the best way to organise a campaign. At the meeting they reached the conclusion that purchasing the cottage and turning it into a literary museum and study centre of the Dymock Poets would be the preferable solution. They called themselves friends of the Dymock Poets.

When the family actually put the cottage up for sale, a public meeting was called, under Marion's initiative, to raise the awareness of the wider public and to discuss the purchase of the cottage. The meeting was held on the evening of 9 September at Dymock Parish Hall. Around 40 people turned up from both within Dymock and other places. Some were poetry fans, some were WPPP members, some were keen on conservation and heritage and some were simply interested in local issues. By this stage, then, non-residents of Dymock were also joining the discussion, most of who came from Ledbury. However, whether they lived in Dymock or not, most of those who attended the meeting were in-migrants. At the beginning of this lively meeting, Marion delivered a short speech to propose forming a proper organisation to commemorate the Dymock Poets. After a passionate discussion, they agreed to support the previous idea of turning the cottage into a poetry museum and also forming a literary society to commemorate the poets. They named the society the Friends of the Dymock Poets replacing f with F, and set the date of an inaugural meeting on the very same day as the auction of the cottage.

A travel writer, Christopher Somerville, and a rural writer, P. J. Kavanagh, both of whom attended the meeting, wrote articles about the cottage for the national media in order to appeal to the wider audience to support their campaign⁴⁷. However, despite the efforts made by those who attended the meeting, the plan to purchase the cottage was becoming increasingly unrealistic because of the lack of time available to raise funds by auction day. They therefore decided to concentrate on setting up the society to commemorate the poets and making the society a kind of pressure group to monitor the situation of the cottage after its sale. To make their stance clear, they set

⁴⁷ Somerville for *the Independent* (25 September), and Kavanagh for *the Spectator* (2 October).

the venue of their inaugural meeting right next door to the site of the auction in The Feathers Hotel in Ledbury.

2.4.7. The Friends of the Dymock Poets

The Friends of the Dymock Poets (FDP) was founded on 6 October, coincidentally the same date that Frost and Thomas first met in 1913. A local builder bid £ 39,000 for the cottage at the auction. Although the FDP invited the builder to their inaugural meeting held next door, he refused to come. At the meeting, Marion was naturally elected as chairman of the society. Under her leadership, five people, including Caroline and Ruth, formed a steering committee. This first committee of the FDP consisted of two Dymock residents and four Ledbury residents; none of them were indigenous to the area. In a sense, the centre of the Dymock Poets issue moved from Dymock to Ledbury at this point.

As for Little Iddens, the FDP closely monitored a planning application submitted by the builder and the process of the restoration of the cottage. In early 1994, they contacted various organisations and local residents to put pressure on the builder not to modernise the cottage too much since they wanted to keep it as a humble cottage of the poor poet. These organisations included the Gloucestershire County Council, the Forest of Dean County Council, the University of Bristol, the then Department of National Heritage, the Government office for the south west, and the US Embassy, which actually contacted the planning department of the district council. Although this made it very difficult for the builder to convert the cottage to a 'suburban style' for further sale, he managed to build a garage with modern materials, put a lamp-post at the gate, which is the only one for miles in the area, tore up the existing hedge and replaced it with shiny laurel, cut down old yew trees and covered the garden with a lawn, on which the FDP commented in their newsletter:

We are also concerned about landscaping around the cottage. It has now been transformed from its appearance a year ago, with Wimbledon-like grass and inappropriate plants around the edge.

The builder lived in the cottage with his family for a while and then submitted another planning application for building an extension to the cottage. Soon after the completion of the extension, in 2000, he sold the cottage for £ 215, 000.

Marion issued various press releases to both local and national newspapers and asked her friends in journalism to write about Dymock. She also talked about Dymock and the poets in several radio programmes. Since then, Dymock, in association with the poets, has had a considerable amount of media coverage, including radio and television programmes, especially from 1993 to 1994. A well-known academic and countryside campaigner, Marion Shoard, wrote in *The Times* weekend magazine's travel section:

Somewhere between the Malverns and the Wye valley lies a patch of England, of which few have heard but many have unwittingly read. ... When Rupert Brooke wrote '... laughter, learnt of friends; and gentleness,/ In heart, at peace, under an English heaven', he was probably recalling days around Dymock. ... In his best-known poem, Frost includes the line 'The woods are lovely, dark and deep', and if you visit Dymock's woods ... , you will find it hard to believe he was not recalling them. ... Frost's poem talks of 'a yellow wood', and wild daffodils still carpet the Dymock woods each spring, crisscrossed by paths along which the poets walked. The scenes through which the visitors passes retains the elements which enchanted them. ... Old apple orchards - like those which probably inspired Frost's *After Apple Picking* - survive still, planted with full size trees. ... People continue to speak with the richly distinctive intonation, tone and temps which coloured the poets' diction.⁴⁸

Like Shoard's article, almost all the media coverage emphasised two points: that the poets nurtured their friendship while they were walking and talking in Dymock and were inspired by its landscape, and that the landscape is virtually unchanged since their time. As a result, both the FDP and the WPPP received dozens of enquiries from all over England and Wales. Dymock saw a sudden increase in visitors who mainly came to Dymock for weekend walking.

One of the unique characteristic of the FDP is the mixture of its members' interests, that is, poetry, heritage, conservation, footpaths and local history. They do not regard themselves as merely a literary society, but, to some extent, also as a countryside conservation group. In their leaflet to attract membership, five aims of the society are listed, along with the poets' achievements while they were in Dymock:

1. to foster an interest in the work of the Dymock Poets
2. to help preserve places and things associated with the Dymock Poets
3. to keep members informed of literary and other matters relating to the Dymock Poets
4. to help protect the border countryside of Herefordshire and Gloucestershire
5. to increase knowledge and appreciation of the landscape between May Hill and the Malvern Hills

⁴⁸ Marion Shoard *The Times* weekend magazine 20/11/1993

This list of aims clearly shows the reason they formed the society. The FDP was formed not just for celebrating the well-known literary figures but also for commemorating their presence in this particular place. In other words, the poets are commemorated because they make the place special. They also create a convenient focal point for various interests existing in the area.

As a thriving society, the FDP organises various activities and events. They organise lectures and poetry readings as a literary society on a regular basis. They also restaged the poets' dramas by commissioning a local amateur dramatic company. They also frequently arrange guided walks or coach tours in and around Dymock, during which poems are read and local history is related. One of the aims of such tours is to raise awareness of the place in association with the poets. These events are usually combined with meals. On one occasion, they reproduced a recorded supper, by which a local farming family entertained the poets very generously and courteously at the local pub. All the activities are reported in newsletters published almost bi-monthly; the newsletters also book reviews, literary information on the poets and contain reports on the Little Iddens situation.

In addition to these activities, the FDP approached the then Cheltenham and Gloucester College of Higher Education (CGCHE), which became the University of Gloucestershire in 2001, to fulfil their unrealised dream; to set up a centre of the Dymock Poets. Marion knew that the college was eager to acquire the university status and assumed that it would be of benefit for them to promote the fact that the college cared about local history. The college responded enthusiastically to the proposal and found available funding for it. Thus, the Dymock Poets Archive and Study Centre was established at one of their campuses in Cheltenham, with its own archivist, in 1995. Frost's granddaughter flew from America to open the centre. In addition to collecting poets' books, manuscripts and photographs, they also reproduce poets' out-of-print works under the name The Cyder Press. The centre has also published occasional papers on the poets and organises academic conferences and workshops, in which scholars use the phrase the 'Dymock Poets' in their papers. As a result, the phrase seems to be accepted among experts on Georgian poetry.

The FDP also actively sponsors and organises lectures, performances and

guided tours on the Dymock Poets for various literary festivals taking place in the area, such as the Ledbury Poetry Festival⁴⁹, the Cheltenham Festival of Literature, the Autumn in Malvern Festival and the Newent Art Festival. Marion travelled around to deliver talks on the poets and edited an anthology of the poets with a detailed introduction. Through these events and efforts, the phrase ‘the Dymock Poets’ has been circulated in the area and beyond. The FDP persuaded local tourist



Plate 5: A guided walk tour organised by the FDP. The cottage behind is Old Nailshop where the Gibsons lived

information centres, both in Ledbury and Newent, to make the anthology and the WPPP maps easily available to the public. They also persuaded a Ledbury second-hand bookshop to specialise in the Dymock Poets. Two other bookshops in Ledbury have books on the Dymock Poets and the WPPP maps on their shelves. When a bypass was constructed around Ledbury and housing developments were built, the FDP approached the town council and suggested naming the streets to be

⁴⁹ This festival was actually the brainchild of a committee member of the FDP. This local joiner, together with another committee member, a local artist, and others, started the festival in 1997, based on their experience of organising events for the FDP. The project turned out to be a tremendous success and is now firmly established, with a full-time director.

built there after the poets. As a result, there is now a Brooke Road, a Gibson Road, and an Abercrombie Close in the area. All these events and the setting up of the centre are the FDP's efforts to establish the legitimacy of 'the Dymock Poets' both in English literature and in the public mind, efforts which have been very successful. In 2000, when the Forest of Dean district council established the Literary Trail, they devoted a quarter of the space in their leaflet to the Dymock Poets, which is far more than for the other entries.

As a conservation group, the FDP has been actively involved with local planning issues. They have kept their eyes not only on Little Iddens but also on this area of the countryside as a whole. When the government earmarked the Dymock wood as part of a piecemeal sale of Forestry Commission land in 1994, they, together with the Council for the Protection of the Rural England, launched a campaign to stop it. One of the reasons they put forward to protect the wood was that it has 'unique position in literary history'. They also launched a campaign with local people in that same year to stop the government proposal to extend the A40 from Cheltenham to the Dymock area. Both plans were dropped after the campaigns. Local people recognised this function of the FDP, so that when a local farmer brought a JCB into his fields between Little Iddens and Oldfield, someone made an anonymous call to the FDP and told them that the farmer would probably grub a hedgerow out. This was before hedgerow regulation was brought in, so his action was legal, but the hedge happened to be described in a Thomas essay, *This England*. The FDP therefore tried to prevent it. Although they failed to rescue the hedge, this incident was widely reported in both local and national newspapers as an example of current hedgerow destruction in the countryside.

The Dymock Poets is now well-established local, and to some extent national, knowledge. Probably because of its name, when people hear the word 'Dymock' they seem automatically to put the word 'poets' after it. However, it does not mean that everyone in Dymock is enthusiastic about the poets, far from it. General opinion on the poets among Dymock residents is either favourable indifference or aggressive hostility. Generally speaking, although they do not have

any intention of getting involved with it, in-migrants are favourable to or welcome the story, which they think gives character to the place, whereas indigenous local people tend to regard it as a nuisance. There is strong opinion among them that this whole story was 'fabricated' by 'airy-fairy strangers'. For some of them, the poets were just 'a bunch of queers' who spent a short holiday in Dymock, and merely freewheeled without producing anything. These local people also tend to regard the current footpath network as an abuse of traditional rural custom. They regard the FDP as the Ledbury people's project, but at the same time some of them complain that the FDP should organise more activities in Dymock rather than in Ledbury. This is probably because, although there are active members of the FDP living in Dymock, most of the committee members are Ledbury residents. In other words, there is a gap of varying degrees between the poets' story and the current residents of Dymock.

Chapter 3: Colwall

3.1 Location: geography, history, community

3.1.1 Geography

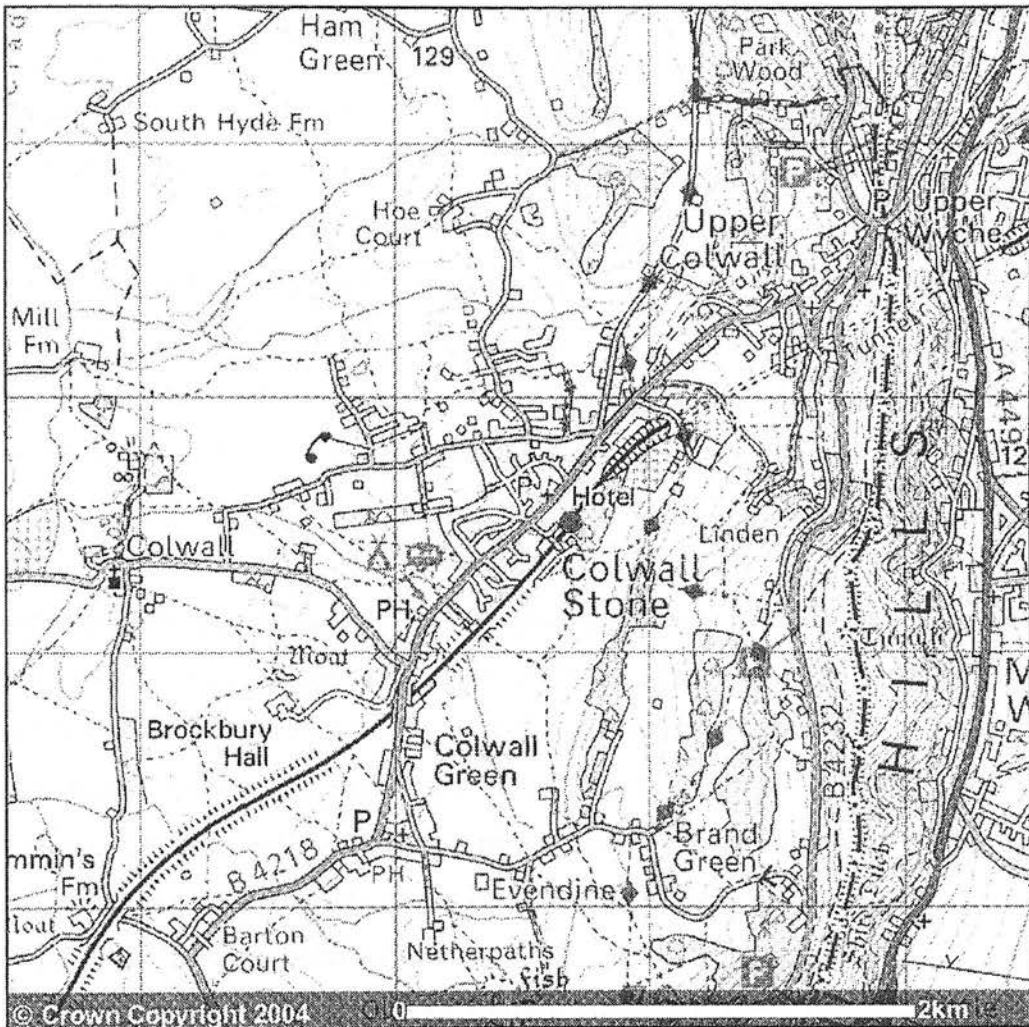
Colwall is located just next to the Worcestershire-Herefordshire border which lies on the ridge of the Malvern Hills. The parish has the ridge as its eastern border, and descends the wooded gentle slope into gently undulating Herefordshire countryside. The western border is marked by the beautifully wooded Oyster Hill, and Chance's Pitch to the south divides Colwall from an adjoining parish, Eastnor. At the south-east corner of the parish sits an Iron-Age hill fort of the British Camp with its distinctive wedding cake-like shape.



Plate 6: Colwall from the Malvern Hills

Although Colwall is surrounded by the hills on three sides it does not have a

cramped feeling since the slopes are gentle and around three miles separate the Malvern ridges and Oyster Hill, which is only 221m high. In this six-square-mile area, both a railway and a road run diagonally from the north-east to the south-west. Most of the houses were built along this road. The rest of the parish is entirely agricultural land, where traditional mixed farming is practised. Livestock grazing takes place on the hill side and more arable fields and orchards in the vale. Most of them are five to six-acre small fields divided by hedges with mature trees.



Map3: Colwall

(Reproduction from 2004 Ordnance Survey maps with permission of the controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office, © Crown copyright NC-032004)

Unless they are local, visitors approach the village from either end of the

main transport lines. Colwall may give them quite different impressions according to the route they take. Both the Worcester-Hereford railway line and the B4218, which joins the A449 at the edge of the parish, connect two towns of Great Malvern and Ledbury. Great Malvern is a large Worcestershire town with a population of 31,413 (1991 census), and was largely developed in the Victorian era as a spa town, now boasting a MOD research agency, high-tech companies and public schools. In other words, Malvern has never had a rural atmosphere since the 19th century, but rather has an urban or suburban air. If visitors start from this town, they have to climb up to the ridge of the Malvern Hills, in the middle of which Malvern nestles. There are houses and other buildings on either side of the road in most places, so the visitors will have a sense of Malvern's continuity all along their route. The top of the ridge is the Wyche Cutting. Wyche is an old English word for salt. This route was used to transport salt from Droitwich to south Wales. Before passing through this small gouge, it is worth looking back. There, the dead flat Severn plain expands to the east, with the only rise at Bredon Hill. The river Severn and the M5 run through relatively large and regular fields. Rows of houses and large buildings in and around Malvern and Worcester will catch the eye, becoming more conspicuous in the evening when the flood of light emanates from them.

The other side of the gouge offers quite a different landscape. On the Herefordshire side, the land is gently undulating all the way to Wales, and is dotted with wood-capped small hills here and there. Most of these hills belonged to estates and have been maintained in such shapes for shooting. Much smaller and irregular fields make up a beautiful patchwork. Except for studded farmsteads, the only built up area is Colwall, and even that is densely covered with trees all around. In fact, trees are abundant in this side of the hills. On the evening, this side has little light except for that emanating from Colwall.

The area around the Wyche Cutting is called Upper Colwall, and is often described as an urban fringe of Malvern. There are houses all the way down to the village at the foot of the hills. Some of them are quite large and have large gardens with exotic trees. All of them are quite modern in style. After a very sharp hairpin and an angle bend in succession and another crank-shaped bend, the road goes

straight down to Colwall. A neat, grey low stone-wall belonging to an estate runs along its right-hand side. In summer, the road is covered by a leafy canopy of trees on both sides. At the entrance to the village, there is a nursery on the right and then the Schweppes factory, which bottles Malvern Water, on the left. Opposite the factory, again on the right, are rows of modern 'Scandinavian style' bungalows with neatly trimmed ornamental trees in front. After passing several shops, the road reaches the centre of Colwall, which is called the Stone since there is a large rectangular stone in the middle of a junction where the post office, a hotel, a pub and a large block of flats occupy each corner. The railway station is on the left about 50 yards from the junction. Although the Malvern Hills lies inbetween, one does not lose a sense of continuity on this route to Colwall from Malvern. There is a gradual change, which is almost like one between a town centre and its suburban outskirts.

The other approach starts from the other town, Ledbury. As one can easily see from the black-and-white buildings which dominate its high street, Ledbury is an old market town, founded in the Middle Ages. The Market House standing in the middle of the high street was originally built for and used as corn storage. Until the year 2000, there was a cattle market just off the high street. The town still maintains a strong relationship with surrounding farming communities. Although Ledbury is the third largest of the six towns in Herefordshire (excluding Hereford city), its population is just under 6,500 (1991 census). It has experienced large expansion since 1980s, and its character is also rapidly changing. However, Ledbury still manages to keep its laid-back country-town atmosphere. A popular guide book *The Rough Guide: England* describes Ledbury, along with Leominster and Ross-on-Wye, as 'old-fashioned, sleepy places struggling hard to find a modern identity that doesn't depend upon a neatly packaged tourist image' (1998: 518)⁵⁰.

If visitors head off to Colwall from this country town by taking the busy A449, they exit the town immediately. After climbing up to a wooded slope, both sides are agricultural fields, most of which are arable although there is some pasture too. They may enjoy the long elegant range of the Malvern Hills and especially the distinctive shape of the British Camp beyond those fields. Except for occasional farm

⁵⁰ The same guide book describes Malvern as 'one of the most exclusive and refined areas of the

buildings, there are few houses on the way. Turn left to take the B4218, or Walwyn Road, just after entering the parish of Colwall at a junction a little up from the foot of the Chance's Pitch, a steep slope leading up to the British Camp. At a bend a large Georgian house is located, where one of the largest landowning families in Colwall has lived for generations. After passing a high hedged area and a small wooden bridge over the road, a view of open country emerges on both sides. The road then enters the southern edge of the village, called Colwall Green. The first buildings there are black-and-white cottages. One of them is a pub called the Yew Tree, which has been run by the same family for generations and is a popular hang-out for local farmers. On the left-hand side is an open view to Oyster Hill beyond fields in some of which sheep and cattle graze. The road soon enters a long avenue lined with mature lime trees. On the left lies still open country and a football pitch, with a long triangular village green on the right. Beyond the green is a row of red-brick semi-detached houses, built in the 1920s. After passing schools and a railway bridge, which marks the border of Colwall Green and Colwall Stone, the density of buildings gradually increases on both sides. Most of the houses are fairly old and modest but are rather non-descript in their styles. A library and a clock tower, which is known as 'Aunt Alice', stand in a small meadow on the left-hand side. The stone is around 20 yards from the library.

Colwall is a long linear village which stretches for around two miles from Upper Colwall to Colwall Green along Walwyn Road and the railway line. As I described above, it gives visitors quite different impressions according to how they approach the village. Colwall can be either an urban/suburban settlement or a rural/country village. These somehow contradictory impressions are shared by both visitors and residents. This ambiguity of impression summarises in a sense the character of the place. Colwall is located in a grey, or transitional, area, between town and country. It is neither entirely urban/suburban nor entirely rural in many ways. It is a contentious issue whether Colwall should be called a 'village' in the first place. We will return to this issue later.

Colwall is not just a long village but is also very large. According to the

Midlands' (1998: 515).

1991 census its population is 2,137, which is extraordinarily large in Herefordshire



Plate 7: Colwall, the centre of the settlement area

terms, large enough to be called a town as in terms of its population⁵¹. It has a railway station in its centre, which is one of the only four stations in Herefordshire⁵². This Worcester-Hereford line does not only provide fairly frequent services to both cities but also offers direct services to both Birmingham and London⁵³. The village has a public library, a post office, a doctor's surgery, two pubs, a hotel which also has a bar inside, three grocery shops, a butcher, a pharmacy, an estate agent and a picture-frame maker, most of which are along the central part of Walwyn Road. Colwall also has a village hall, a Church of England primary school and two prep-schools. There is a village green, a football pitch and two cricket grounds. All

⁵¹ The populations of neighbouring parishes are much smaller: Mathon 272, Coddington 110, Eastnor 249. The population of the smallest town, Kington is about 2,200.

⁵² Other stations are at Ledbury, Hereford and Leominster, all of which have city or town status.

⁵³ It takes one hour to reach Birmingham and two and a half hours to reach London Paddington.

these shops and facilities stand more or less along Walwyn Road⁵⁴, as does more than 80% of its population. All of them take up probably 20% of the entire parish.

The other 80% of the parish consists of agricultural land and parkland attached to some estates. Farms, houses and cottages are scattered around the area. The east side of the main axis (that is, the road and the railway line) is the slope of the Malvern Hills. This western slope of the hills is much gentler than the other side and is well wooded. Houses are concentrated in Upper Colwall, and there are several relatively large villas along Jubilee Road which runs parallel to the ridge from Upper Colwall to the British Camp. The middle to lower part of the slope is used mostly for sheep grazing. There are numerous springs and spouts on the slope, one of which, the Pewtress spring flowing out just below the British Camp, provides water to Schweppes for bottling the Malvern Water. The name 'Colwall' is believed to be a corruption of 'Cold Well'. Water from these springs and spouts gradually accumulates and makes a stream which runs through the parish from the south-east to the north-west.

The road and the railway line run at the foot of the slope. The other side is flat land for mixed farming which makes beautiful small, irregular patchwork that changes its colours according to the seasons. In the middle of the fields stands the parish church with its solid grey tower. The old rectory, now a bed and breakfast, is next to the church. A 16th-century timber-framed building nogged with red bricks, across the road is Park Farm, which was originally built as a hunting lodge for the Bishop of Hereford in the 13th century. The church was built as its chapel. The bishop had been the lord of the manor until 1910 when the church commission sold the farm and land. This area, a mile away from the village, had been the centre of the parish until the 1860s when the railway was built. After the building of the railway, the village mushroomed and has developed along the main axis, the area around the church being left intact. It is said that this side of the parish has not changed at all in a long time. Farmers still move their stock on country lanes, which are very quiet and one can walk for miles without seeing anyone. On the south-west corner of the parish lies Oyster Hill. Two well-established estates, Old Colwall and Hope End, are

⁵⁴ There are two more pubs, a hotel which also has a bar, and two cafes up on the hill side in the

located here, which made and keep this area beautifully landscaped parkland.

3.1.2 History and community⁵⁵

When M. N. Thomas wrote *A History of the Parish of Colwall*, she began in a very modest way: 'It may fairly be said that there is nothing memorable in the history of Colwall, no great events and few people of national importance' (1977: iv). She is perhaps right, but it does not mean that Colwall has developed into a 'typical' English village, if there is such a village.

The history of Colwall cannot be separated from two features, that is, the Malvern Hills and the water from the hills. The first dwellers in this area settled on the hills. Those Iron Age people made a settlement on one of the hills and built the basis of defensive earthworks consisting of ditches and banks, which is now known as the British Camp. They chose the site probably for its visibility miles around, which should have made them easier to defend the place, and also for abundance of water on its slope. This peculiar shaped Iron-Age hill fort settlement is highly valued by the present residents of Colwall since it can be seen from any part of the parish and gives them a solid point of reference for their sense of place. It also attracts over a million visitors a year. On sunny weekends, coachloads of people come to ramble around the hill fort.

The Anglo-Saxons came to the vale and reclaimed scrubland for farming. They formed the prototype of the present parish, as they did many other parishes in England. It was supposedly they who named the place 'Coolwell' or 'Coldwell' after the water from the hills. By the year 700 the parish had become part of the Bishop of Hereford's property, reserved mainly for hunting. By the time the Domesday survey was conducted, Colwall had already established itself as a thriving agricultural community with a population of around 100. The lord of the manor was the Bishop of Hereford. This absentee landlord came to visit the Episcopal chase and stayed at his lodge, now the Park Farm, for hunting. The layout of the parish was supposed to be a typical example of a parish in Welsh Marches, that is, there was no particular

parish. Until quite recently there was another pub on Walwyn Road.

⁵⁵ This section is based on (Smith 1964), (Waite 1968), (Stringer 1954), (Thomas 1977), (Ballard 1999), (Hurle 1984), (Cooney 2000), (Livesey 1950, part1-5).

centre, but instead scattered farmsteads and cottages which were connected by winding lanes. This pattern had remained until the late 19th century. There is no document to suggest when the current field pattern was established, but not even a single enclosure award has been found in Colwall and the current field pattern is already on the 1842 tithe map, so it may be safe to assume that it had been established by the 16th century just as many other parishes in Welsh Marches (W. G. Hoskins 1955: 141). Furthermore, the Malvern Hills have always been used as common land.

Colwall had remained a quiet, entirely agricultural community until the mid-19th century. There is little documentation to illustrate life in Colwall during that period, but two authors did refer to it a little, now often mentioned by current Colwall residents. The first instance is through the eyes of Piers the Ploughman, who got his 'vision' 'on a morning in May, among the Malvern Hills' when he 'lay down to rest under a broad bank by the side of a stream, and leaned over gazing into the water. ... between a tower high up...splendidly built on top of a hill. ... and a great gulf with a dungeon in it, surrounding by deep dark pits'⁵⁶. He viewed the 14th-century Colwall from the hill:

I saw a smooth plain, thronged with all kinds of people, high and low together, moving busily about their worldly affairs. Some laboured at ploughing and sowing, with no time for pleasure, sweating to produce food for the gluttons to waste (Langland 1959: 25)

In 1600 another writer, who came to Malvern to collect water and stayed in Colwall, was appalled by the 'old popish' practice of the parishioners, who left the church service halfway through and, led by a priest, went to the adjoining Ale House to have a feast. When they finally completed the service, they set up a Maypole and continued the feast around it for the rest of the day⁵⁷. The 16th century timber-framed ale-house is still standing by the church gate, and current parishioners of Colwall are

⁵⁶ William Langland wrote the book to criticise the greed and hypocrisy of his contemporaries. The place is identified as being on a slope of the Chance's pitch, where a stream from the Pewtress spring flowed down and the British Camp is above on the hill, and an ancient moated farm of Oldcastle below. The author, William Langland, was supposedly born and bred in Colwall and educated at a monastery in Great Malvern. There is a field known as Longlands or Langlands from which he is assumed to have taken his name.

⁵⁷ The Newe Metamorphosis of J(ervis) M(arkham) Unpublished manuscript in the British Museum (Waite 1968: 135-6)

fond of this little episode as proof of 'an old-fashioned happy village'.

These pre-historic and medieval elements are inscribed in the surrounding landscape which people in Colwall see and pass through on a daily basis. However, a part of history which actually formed the current nature of the village began in the mid-19th century when the railway arrived at the parish. The importance of the arrival of the railway cannot be stressed too highly. The tithe map made two decades before the arrival of the railway shows us a sparsely populated rural parish. This picture was soon to be altered dramatically.

The railway line which connects Worcester and Hereford as part of a connection between the Midlands and South Wales was completed in 1861. Colwall station is sandwiched by two tunnels: one through the Malvern Hills and another through Dog Hill just outside Ledbury. Both tunnels were constructed by an engineer, Stephen Ballard, who with his family changed the village drastically, or more precisely, set the foundations of the current 'village'. It was he who stipulated that a station should be built in a then featureless rural village between Malvern and Ledbury.

Stephen Ballard (1804-90) was born on the other side of the hills, to a well-established local family, and made his name as a canal and railway contractor. According to his grandson, young Stephen noticed that water from two springs on the hills ran down towards Colwall, and decided to buy the land and develop it if he could ever afford to in the future. He realised his boyhood dream after acquiring an international reputation as a canal and railway engineer. He bought the land along Walwyn Road from the late 1830s on, and first built his own house and moved there in 1856. The first thing he did after the railway was to construct a water supply to Colwall from the springs. He then built modern simple but elegant concrete houses, locally known as 'Ballard houses', along Walwyn Road. He continued to utilise the water, and set up a vinegar brewery just off the Stone. This award-winning vinegar was shipped out from the station just across the road. He also persuaded Schweppes, which at that time bottled the famous water on the other side of the hills, to come to Colwall. Attracted by the purity of the Ballard water and the railway, they set up the

current factory to bottle Malvern Water in 1892⁵⁸. He also constructed a part of the now highly popular Jubilee Road on the hill, which provides spectacular views for people⁵⁹. He also constructed roads and a hotel around the station. Houses mushroomed around the station. Ballard was also a passionate conservationist. At that time, the Malvern Hills were suffering from severe encroachment. To prevent further damage on the hills and commons around, he led a group of people and succeeded in setting up one of the oldest conservation bodies in Britain with the 1884 Malvern Hills Act⁶⁰.

Stephen Ballard's venture to develop Colwall was carried on by his children. The oldest, Fred, set up the Colwall Gas Company in 1887, which supplied mains gas to Colwall households. Colwall had gas streetlights at the very end of the 19th century. He also operated a brickworks, which provided bricks for building some of the cottages in the village. Another son, also named Stephen, took over the brewery. He started to grow fruits and bottled them, as well as continuing the vinegar business. When the vinegar production became commercially unviable, he switched it to fruit bottling and canning business, which converted many fields around the village into orchards for growing apples, pears and plums. An ice works and a sawmill, which produced boxes to ship cans and bottles, became offshoots of this business. Ernest Ballard, who also ran the factory with his brother, started a nursery. He built a nationwide reputation as a breeder of Michaelmas Daisies.

The Ballards were not the only people to seize the opportunity presented by the arrival of the railway. A man who married into the largest landowning family in Colwall at that time also started various business. After gaining control of the family assets, Roland Cave-Brown-Cave began to build recreational facilities in Colwall. He first built a luxury hotel in mock-Tudor style, and then constructed a racecourse across the railway line, where fields were spread at the foot of the hills. The idea was

⁵⁸ Later, in the 1920s, the Ballard water became polluted for some unknown reason, and Schweppes switched its supply to the Pewtress Spring, owned by another influential local family, the Brights. Since then they have pipelined the water for two miles from the spring.

⁵⁹ He had to construct this road to ensure public access to his land on the hill, which he enclosed. The construction coincided with Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee. In England, various monuments were built or named in honour of the monarch, especially at Jubilee celebrations. Ballard himself designed the road which was invisible from below.

⁶⁰ The statutory body, the Malvern Hills Conservators, now owns most of the Malvern Hills.

to draw people from the Midlands and South Wales by rail, which was also convenient to transport horses, and let them stay at the hotel. He also built a pub in the same mock-Tudor style at the other entrance to the racecourse. This development turned out to be a rather popular attraction, and the race continued to be held, even during the First World War. For the meets, special trains were arranged, which carried a lot of people to Colwall. He later developed a golf course on the slope of the Malvern Hills and built some luxury villas on the hills.

In addition to these in-migrants, a local, Tom Pedlingham, whose family had been in the area since the early 19th century, also profited from the opportunity. He built two pairs of houses next to the Schweppes factory, and let them out as shops, such as a butcher, a general store, a grocer, a bakery and a shoe repairer. These buildings are still there, most of which are still used as shops and function as the centre of the village. He later erected a clock tower in Walwyn meadow to honour his wife. This much loved clock tower is called 'Aunt Alice', which became a kind of symbol of the parish.

Perhaps because of these developments brought by the railway and its attractive surroundings, several schools were set up in Colwall. In addition to the Church of England primary school, Colwall once had three other private schools, two prep-schools and a girls' domestic science college. One of the prep-schools was actually founded in the 17th century but was expanded during this period and reformed later in the early 20th century. The other one was set up in 1900 and was run as a Quaker school for some considerable time, since several well-known Quaker families, such as the Cadburys, had residences in the area. It is well known locally that a young W. H. Auden taught at the school and lived in the village for three years in the 1930s. The domestic science college was founded in 1896 to educate girls of marrying age. All of them were, or still are, boarding schools educating from 80 to 150 pupils.

Richard, a nursery owner who moved into Colwall in 1948 when he was six and has lived there ever since, recalled the village in the 1950s:

Colwall at the time when we arrived, although it's a village, a large village, a very sort of active and vibrant village, because there's a railway line and a station. I actually made a note of all the shops there those days. There was still a race course and a golf course, which was closed during the war,

but there was a golf course, swimming bath, tennis courts, they had a garage, a nursery which I've said, also another nursery which was [****] picking hop [***], and another nursery which grew roses, so there were three nursery gardens. And a main post office, a couple of other post offices by the end of the village and a fishmonger, greengrocer, bakers, these two grocery shops, two butchers, shoe repairs, barber, two ironmongers where you buy nails, [**] and wood and all sorts of things, two shops sold clothing, woollen, sewing material, two banks. It's not really a village, is it? In those days, I expect there were about 1,500 people, and that's now gone up to about 2,300, I believe. But you are going always to think to see, they have their own gas works, blacksmith.

In parallel with these commercial developments, the population of the parish also grew steadily. According to the census data, there were 509 residents in Colwall in 1871, a decade after the railway arrived. This figure jumped to 1,892 at the turn of the century. Since then the population of Colwall has hovered around 2,000. This increase in population means an increase in the number of houses. I was not able to find any document tracing development during this period, but it must have taken place around the Stone and the railway station. Private developments seem to have been carried out on a piecemeal basis. Several council houses were built along the railway line and around Colwall Green in the inter-war period.

This growth did not last forever. Both the racecourse and the golf course had changed hands after Cave-Brown-Cave's bankruptcy, and were then closed completely after the Second World War. Now both sites have returned to their original forms of agricultural fields. The Ballard cannery was also closed in 1961, and since then many of the shops described above have gone one by one. The railway station, which once had a station master and two platforms, has now only one unattended platform. The domestic science college was also closed in 1994.

However, the departure of these businesses provided good opportunities for housing developments. The shops and offices were converted into private houses. The factory and related facilities were all demolished and houses were built at the site. The increase in private cars meant that Colwall became a rather attractive place to live for those who worked in nearby towns. Again Richard describes this:

Big increase in the amount of houses, because during the end of the 50s they put up quite a number of houses, which were council, put up by the council, and also in the 60s when people in the village began to sell off various pieces of land and private developments as well, so you get very big expensive bungalows and that sort of thing. So, it changed dramatically actually. If someone had been in Colwall in the 50s and had gone away, and come back in the early 80s, although he would be able to recognise the place, he would see vast differences. That's just in the village area, the built up area. When you get out into the country, very little has changed, very little change.

Indeed, as I described it in the previous section, there has always been more or less the same landscape there. Although Colwall has experienced tremendous changes, almost all of them were confined along Walwyn Road, which makes up around 20% of the whole parish. Most of the remaining 80% has always been used for farming. Before the arrival of the railway, it is safe to assume that its population had entirely depended on agriculture in one way or another. In inverse proportion to the increase in the parish population, the farming population has steadily decreased. After mechanisation, this tendency accelerated. By 1950, the farming population was reduced to 140 as opposed to the whole population of 2,066, which accounted for less than 7%⁶¹. In 1950, there were still 56 agricultural holdings, of which only two were above 200 acres and 15 were above 50 acres. Most of them were tenant farmers working on the land owned by several landowners in the parish. In other words, at that stage, the land was still managed by traditional, very small-scale farming. There were changes, of course. Hop yards, once abundant in the parish, disappeared completely in the 1930s, big old fruit trees were replaced with small bushy trees in orchard and the number of sheep on the hills, or common land, decreased dramatically, but the number of cattle increased, for milk production in the post-war era. Although hedgerows were grubbed out for more efficient farming in the 1960s and 70s just as in any rural parish in England, it was not for more than a few miles in Colwall, so that it did not create so-called prairie fields which can be seen in neighbouring parishes. The landscape has been kept almost intact to this day. In 1959, the Malvern Hills area was designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)⁶². The entire parish of Colwall became part of this newly created Malvern Hills AONB, which was supposed to ensure that the landscape remained unchanged.

Although there were housing developments in the 1950s and 60s, most of them were council houses, as Richard mentioned above which were mainly occupied by local people. Elderly people who have spent most of their lives in Colwall remember the place during this period and describe it as a close-knit community

⁶¹ In the case of an entirely agricultural parish the average figure was 12% (Livesey 1950 part 4: 14).

⁶² The Malvern Hills AONB, a pear-shaped 105sq.km, is the eighth smallest among 41 AONBs in England and Wales. AONBs were initiated with the 1949 National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act.

where everybody knew everybody else. They say, however, that the character of the place began changing rapidly in the mid-1970s when Colwall experienced a large influx of in-migrants and an outflow of the local population. There is not data available to show the actual change of the character of the population, but many old people, who lived in Colwall before that time, remember it that way: in-migrants started to move into the village in the 1970s and 80s. Perhaps one of the reasons for this impression is that several parts of the parish were developed into residential areas which consist not of modest council houses but of modern so-called 'executive style' houses which are usually ubiquitous, red-brick suburban-style buildings. The prices of these neat detached houses were well beyond local people's budgets. Oak Drive in the central part of Stone, where the cannery used to be, was developed into such an area, and rows of 'Scandinavian-style' houses were built. Redland Drive, at the edge of the village, which used to be made up of agricultural fields, was also developed as a cul-de-sac where the same 'executive houses' were built. These houses were bought by the in-migrated population, who were either commuters or retired. Several people who worked in the then MOD research agency in Malvern moved into the village during this period because of its reorganisation⁶³.

Housing development has taken place on a piecemeal basis since the 1970s, most of which was all small-scale in-fill development. In 1998, when Malvern Hills District Council published its Local Plan, its Planning Service Department drew settlement boundaries around the Stone and the Green, which made it very difficult to receive planning permission outside the area⁶⁴.

According to the 1991 census, there were 2,137 residents in Colwall, in 900 households, of which 714 were over 60 years old (33.4%, that is 8% higher than the Herefordshire average). There were 18 second homes and three holiday accommodations in the parish. The number of farms was reduced to four and each

⁶³ This research agency specialised in radar technology, and which kept changing its name, originally arrived in Malvern during the Second World War to avoid German attack. Since then, it has remained in Malvern, and because of its presence quite a few scientists and military officers have moved into the area, including Colwall. In July 2000 the agency was part privatised and re-named again as Quinetique.

⁶⁴ Because of the reorganisation of the local government, Colwall was transferred from the Malvern Hills District Council to a newly created Unitary Herefordshire Council in April 1998. However, Herefordshire Council endorsed the settlement boundaries.

farm was managed by a couple of people. Colwall has lost several facilities, including banks and shops, but it still has a wide range of the services mentioned above. It also has various active clubs and societies. Half the households are registered in the higher council tax bands, which is quite unusual in Herefordshire. In other words, Colwall today is rather a well-off village.

3.2 Character: village, suburb or town?

The influx of in-migrants, along with its population and character, makes Colwall a rather an ambiguous place. As Richard said, 'It's not really a village, is it?', what Colwall is, is quite a contentious issue. Although Colwall is surrounded by countryside, the arrival of the railway with the consequent commercial developments and geographical proximity to towns and cities gives the place an urban, or suburban, atmosphere. Richard remembers the time he moved from another Herefordshire village in 1948:

Colwall at the time when we arrived, although it's a village, a large village, a very sort of active and vibrant village, because there's a railway line and a station. ... That was very noticeable, because the previous village had just one village shop and a butcher. Very different. We found we came from the country into a semi-urban area.

And on another occasion he told me:

No, no. Colwall is nearly the suburbs really. ... Colwall isn't a typical country village. It's a suburban village, a green-belt village.

It was not only Richard who described Colwall in that way. Brian, whose family has owned a large proportion of the land in the parish for generations, does not regard Colwall as a village either. When I called it a village, he corrected my wording. 'Colwall isn't a village. It's the suburbs. It's the suburbs of Malvern'.

How to describe Colwall has always been a problem. When the BBC produced a five-week series of radio program, *Colwall: an English village*, in 1950⁶⁵,

⁶⁵ The programme was produced by Edward Livesey, who went to one of the prep-schools in Colwall, for the then Midland Home Service, and was broadcast on Wednesday evenings from 15 March to 12 April 1950. The programme was later digested into a one-hour version and broadcasted on 5 May as *A*

they said they chose Colwall because it was a changing village:

'The Changing Village', does it mean the end of rural life and traditions? And Colwall is a very good village to choose for this enquiry, because some people would say, do say, that it has already ceased to be a village (Livesey 1950b: 2)

The programme conducted survey of 20% of the household in Colwall, which revealed, surprisingly, that almost two-thirds of wage-earners worked in the parish and small numbers went to Malvern, Worcester and Ledbury to work. Based on this survey and interviews with local people, two experts, a country writer and a town planner, insisted in the first part of the programme that Colwall was a village.

Writer: Even though Colwall is so big ... everyone likes to know everything about everyone else in a village - over and over again it became obvious that the Colwall people still knew all about each other. We were in a village, not a town.

Planner : Well, Colwall is certainly much larger than the normal village, but it is so scattered and has three hamlets, as it were, within it, it is still definitely a village. It isn't even an urban village where urban filtration has occurred, in the factories that have been established there and the people from towns who have come to it, the village atmosphere has won.

Writer: Yes, it's not an urban village, or a dormitory village, it is just a changing village. (Livesey 1950a part 1: 27)

However, actual residents did not seem to be so sure. A beekeeper made a comment on the development of Colwall:

Colwall people are definitely afraid of the future. That was why our village centre [a development plan] was turned down. They were fearful. Afraid of the risk and a afraid of becoming townified. (Livesey 1950a part 5: 10)⁶⁶

This village/town distinction is quite important and we will discuss the issue later.

As opposed to what the experts speaking in the programme said, when the West Midland Group published *English County: survey of Herefordshire* in 1946 for post-war reconstruction and planning of the county, they categorised Colwall as an 'urban village'.

In some parts of the country these needs [recreational, cultural and shopping facilities] are met by the so-called 'urban village', in Herefordshire the only representatives of this settlement type are Colwall and Leintwardine (p. 192)

Changing Village. In the programme, residents of the parish discussed issues such as history, environment, farming, and the present and future of the parish, with a presenter and experts.

⁶⁶ However, a then schoolmaster of the Downs, who worked as a local coordinator for the programme, made a comment quite contrary to the general feeling of the residents: 'My own feeling is that the development of a place like the Stone into a thing like a small market place or country town square wouldn't be a bad development at all' (Livesey 1950a part 5: 10).

This idea of an 'urban village' was borrowed from R.E.Dickinson's paper entitled *Social Basis of Physical Planning* (1939-40), in which he indicated that a settlement should provide 'a reasonable standard of amenities in a rural area' and should have a minimum population of 1,000'(cited in West Midland Group *ibid*: 191). The West Midland Group pointed out that only Colwall had a population of over 1,000 as a compact settlement. They described Colwall as follows:

The most striking of the three minor areas of higher population density is that of Colwall, adjoining the Malvern Hills. Here the scenic attraction of the area, combined with good rail communication with Worcester and the urban centres of the West Midlands, had encouraged extensive residential development during the last 60 or 70 years. This development has taken place, not around the old village nucleus, whose rural seclusion has been little affected by these changes, but near the station a mile or so away. In 1931 the density of Colwall parish (0.52 per acre) was the highest of any rural parish in the county, while in total population it exceeded the towns of Bromyard (pop. 1,570) and Kington (pop. 1,742) (p.64)

Since then, Colwall has been treated as a semi-urban or suburban area in official documents produced by local governments and central government agencies. When the then Countryside Commission produced a landscape assessment booklet for the Malvern Hills AONB, Colwall was described as follows:

On the foot slopes of the Malvern ridge, a dispersed pattern of housing is evident, with large conifers giving a lush and suburban feel to the landscape. Colwall Stone and Colwall Green have both grown from small local clusters of houses and terraced cottages to a more diffuse pattern of one and two-storey dwellings of a ubiquitous suburban type (1993: 22-3)

3.3. Colwall Village Society

Colwall is proud of its active social life. The parish has no fewer than 30 social organisations from the parish council to an amateur dramatic society, most of which are very active with a healthy membership. One of the newest of these societies was launched in February 1998.

Teresa, a recently retired DERA (Defence Evaluation Research Agency, in Malvern) scientist who moved into Colwall in the mid-1970s from the south-east, hatched an idea to create a society in Colwall. Having lived in Colwall almost for a quarter of a century but being busy at work, she hardly knew anything about the

locality and its community. When she retired, for the first time since she arrived in Colwall she turned her attention to the locality and the lives of the people in it.

This gentle but very active woman soon realised the necessity of a society which deals with various issues in the parish which affect all residents. She found that although Colwall had a lot of societies and clubs, they were too specialised for their purposes. She also found that the residents in Colwall were divided into a number of small sections according to their interests, and there was not much opportunity to cross those boundaries. She wanted to create a space where everyone in Colwall could join in and express their concerns and interests freely in an informal manner. In this sense, what she wanted was slightly different from a more formal organisation of the parish council. She wanted to create a society which could function as a voice of the parish. In a way, her attempt can be regarded as a desire to create a community in Colwall which in her eyes consisted of several communities⁶⁷.

The society should not be too specialised for its purpose, but at the same time she did not want to make it a vague social club. Behind this idea of creating a society, there seemed to be a feeling in her mind that because of its size and the piecemeal development, Colwall was losing its character and becoming a faceless suburb, which should be stopped. To keep and enhance its character, or distinctiveness as a place, Colwall needed someone to look after it. To put it in another way, what she wanted to create was a kind of guardian or steward of the locality, which would help to keep its character.

Although she wanted to have a general vehicle to gather people together and encourage them to pay more attention to the locality, she had two areas of particular concern, that is history and planning, both of which were her personal concerns as well. She wanted to know more about the local history, especially the history of the environment or land use in Colwall. The other topic, planning, stemmed from two particularly controversial developments in Colwall at that time. One had already been carried out, and the other had been at the stage of getting planning permission⁶⁸. She

⁶⁷ However, she tried to avoid using the word 'community' in our conversation. She said she does not like the word.

⁶⁸ These two developments are Brookmill Close development and Lockyear's site development, both of which I shall examine in detail in Chapter 5.

felt that something should be and should have been done for them.

She broached the idea of forming the society with her neighbours. They were also recently retired people who had moved into Colwall in the 1970s when the area was developed from fields into a cul-de-sac of 12 executive-style houses. They immediately agreed with her idea. One of them, George, was particularly interested in planning and environmental issues. He used to commute to Birmingham but now works for several voluntary organisations concerning local amenities, such as the Malvern Hills Conservators and the Council for the Protection of Rural England. The other person, Gerald, who used to work for the BBC, was interested in local history. Together with a few other people, they first formed a kind of preparatory committee and then held a public meeting at the village hall to see what the response would be from residents of the parish. Around 50 people turned up at the meeting and gave strong support for the idea of setting up a general society which especially concerned the history and planning of Colwall, and how best to retain its character. Most of those who attended the meeting were in-migrants from various periods, and they expressed particularly strong concerns about the planning and development of the parish, especially the controversial developments. Although Teresa stressed to me that the reason for forming the society was not in order to stop further development in Colwall, it cannot be denied that the desire to control development and exert an influence on planning in the parish was one of the strongest motivations and concerns for setting up the society⁶⁹.

With the support from the public that they received at the meeting, they set up the Colwall Village Society. Around 80 people gathered at the inaugural meeting, in which they established two principal aims of the society:

⁶⁹ The society started to issue its bi-monthly newsletter in March 1998. In the first issue, there were short reports on the alteration of the railway embankments in the parish and a planning application for a new telecoms mast. With its second issue, the society produced a two-page information sheet on planning issues. The sheet began by expressing dissatisfaction with the current planning system, which does not give decision-making powers to local people (ie parish councils), and which allows only for the applicant to appeal against the decision made by the planning authority. It then states carefully that the society will not express any opinion on a particular planning application. I assume that the society was very aware of the potential danger of being labelled as a NIMBY pressure group from the very beginning, which was probably why Teresa emphasised that the society had not been formed to stop development. However, the sheet encourages readers to check and express their views on planning issues by giving them detailed information. In the third issue, Teresa wrote a one-page detailed report of the history and current situation on the Lockyears site.

- 1) To protect and improve the village environment and amenity
- 2) To research and record its history.

Teresa was elected as chairman of the society, and George and Gerald became the vice-chairman-cum-environment officer and the treasurer-cum-history officer respectively. Following the formal business, there was a discussion session entitled *Wander Down Memory Lane in Colwall*, during which six born-and-bred, long-standing residents of the parish talked about the past days of Colwall to the audience that mainly consisted of in-migrants. They talked about farming, life on the hill, and pubs and other commercial activities in Colwall, all of which were recorded on tape and later made available to the public as part of an archive that the society began to create.

The society wasted no time but immediately started half a dozen projects. Three times a year they organised lectures on the history and environment of the parish, with guest speakers. For the history side of its activity, the society launched a series of history projects, which aimed to *collect* any historical material relevant to Colwall and record it in written, tape-recorded, photographic or digital forms. The material varied from physical artefacts to people's memories, but together they would form an archive of local history.

Around thirty people who actively participated in the history projects suggested more than 80 topics to be studied. These topics included histories of well-known families, of churches, of shops and pubs, of societies and clubs, of schools, of particular parts of the parish, of estates, of properties and fields, of buildings and so on. To begin with, around a dozen topics were selected and research on these topics was carried out. Most of those who participated in the research were in-migrants. They not only studied various documents but also interviewed elderly people in the parish to gather information. Some of the topics have been completed and published as parts of *Colwall History Topics Booklet*. One member of the history projects team volunteered to conduct interviews with born-and-bred Colwallians to record the memories of their youth. The interviews were tape-recorded, and the tapes were later transcribed and stored in the archive together with the transcriptions.

Another group of people started to produce a history booklet to

commemorate the millennium. The colour booklet, *Colwall through the Millennia*, was completed in 2000 and distributed to every single household in the parish with the help of a National Lottery grant. The booklet outlines Colwall's history from the Bronze Age to today in 30 or so pages with pictures and illustrations. This booklet turned out to be very popular among Colwall residents, some of whom bought extra copies and presented them to friends. The copies were all sold out, and the society had to have it reprinted to meet demand.

Yet another group has been working on 'the Colwall 2000 Doomsday Project', which started as an independent project but soon became part of the Village Society. They first collected old photographs and postcards of the parish, and then took photographs with the same composition as the old ones⁷⁰. These Colwall now and then photographs are to be compiled in CD-ROM form.

All the results of the projects and materials collected during the research have been gathered together to form an archive of Colwall history. A group of people have been working to produce a catalogue and to compile the archive. A recently constructed annex of the village library, the Millennium Room, will house this archive.

There was also a team which carried out the Hedgerow Survey. Hedgerows were a concern of many parishioners' concern. When a farmer removed a stretch of hedgerows along a main road at the edge of the parish, with planning permission, many people expressed concern. The incident was featured in the first issue of the society's news letter. Subsequently, the society invited representatives of the Herefordshire Nature Trust and the local CPRE to talk about new hedgerow regulations. The CPRE had launched its nationwide campaign to survey and protect hedgerows as part of the national heritage. Several members of the society decided to conduct this survey in Colwall. The aim was to record the existing old hedgerows in the parish which appeared in the 1842 tithe map, and to put them under the protection of the new hedgerow regulations. The survey has already been completed and a record is kept in the archive. The same group is now planning to conduct a tree

⁷⁰ This project first started recording all Colwall houses with their residents, but after receiving little support from the parishioners, some of whom were reluctant to be photographed for security reasons, the team changed it to its present form.

survey for the same purpose.

The hedgerow and tree surveys form part of not only the historical but also the planning side of the society's activities. However, this aspect of the society mainly focused on the production of the Village Design Statement.

3.4. Village Design Statement

The Village Design Statement (VDS) was a project launched by the then Countryside Commission (now the Countryside Agency) in 1996. The Commission first published a booklet called *Design in the Countryside* in 1993 which focused on regional diversity and the local distinctiveness of buildings, settlements and landscapes. The VDS is a consequence of the booklet. The idea of the project is to let local residents assess their environment and pick out the distinctive character of the place to produce design guidelines for future development and planning assessment. Behind these projects, there was increasing criticism of new developments taking place in the countryside, especially of their standardised and poor designs. The aim of the VDS is not to stop or decrease the number of developments but to reflect local character in development plans. In a sense, the Commission launched this project to evade the criticism and to absorb and mitigate a protest against development in the countryside.

The idea of producing the VDS in Colwall came from Pat, who joined a VDS workshop as a member of Colwall parish council. The workshop was organised by the Malvern Hills AONB as a training day for parish councils within its boundaries. Pat is also a member of the newly formed Village Society. After the workshop, she presented the society with the idea of producing the VDS in Colwall. Under her initiative, around a dozen members of the village society gathered to begin the project in 1998, immediately after its formation. One of the Village Society's principal aims, 'to protect and improve the village', came from people's disillusionment with the local planning authority over their approval of recent developments in the village, especially Brookmill Close and a block of flats which would dominate the centre of the village. It was quite natural then, that they should

want to launch this project.

They followed closely the guidelines provided by the Commission when they produced the Statement. The Commission provided very detailed guidelines, which included an each stage of the production and even a final format of the document. The group first held a public meeting at the village hall with an officer of the Commission as a guest speaker. The meeting was titled *Colwall - is it too late*, and over 80 people attended. They then held a one-day VDS workshop at the village hall, again with the Commission officer, which 20 people attended. Participants were divided into five groups and went out into the village with cameras in hand. Each group was allocated a section of the village and they spent around two hours taking photographs. After lunch they discussed the character of the village based on the photographs they had taken in the morning.

After the workshop, around a dozen core members of the design team started to have regular meetings. All those who actively participated in the project were in-migrants of varied lengths of residence in Colwall. Their backgrounds are various but none of them has farming or landed interests. Pat, who led the team, moved to Colwall in the mid-1980s from a nearby village. She has stood in the parish council as a councillor and then as chairman. She works at a public school in Malvern, and has extensive knowledge of the recent history of local planning issues and a deep understanding of the general feeling of Colwall residents towards the developments. Edward is a retired civil engineer who in 1995 moved into a newly-built bungalow from one of the Home Counties. He and his wife decided to leave the village they used to live in because of its suburbanisation caused by over-development. They chose Colwall because it was still 'rural'. The fact that Colwall is in the AONB also affected their decision. They believed that its status would protect the place from any development. Henry is a retired DERA scientist who in 1990 moved from a London suburb to work in Malvern. He and his wife joined the team because they were very interested in buildings. Nancy moved to Colwall in the mid-1970s because of her late husband's job and has been closely involved with the management of the church and the village hall. She independently set up a small group with her neighbours to monitor planning issues in the Colwall

Green and Evendine areas. She lives in a sympathetically converted old granary. Sam is a retired planning officer who moved into a flat in a converted school a few years ago. Together with other members, they worked on the VDS for the next two years

The team first studied the Local Plan written by the Malvern Hills District Council (MHDC) in January 1998, to which Colwall belonged until April, when it was transferred to the newly created Unitary Authority of Herefordshire Council. They were aware of the fact that Herefordshire Council would have to produce its own development plan, and the VDS would be the most suitable way for them to have an influence on the forthcoming development plan. The MHDC's settlement profile of Colwall was written in a very protectionist tone, which was clearly expressed in its three objectives of Colwall future planning:

1. To prevent the spread of development into the countryside
 2. To protect public and private open spaces from development
 3. To protect the playing fields from development
- (MHDC 1998: 212)

It does not mention any possibility for development of any kind in Colwall, and the district council drew settlement boundaries, which would make it extremely difficult to get planning permission for any development. The Plan was written in this strong protectionist tone because in a consultation process held prior to the publication, Colwall residents argued very strongly and bitterly against recent planning decisions taken by the district council. The VDS team naturally found the Local Plan highly agreeable and decided to use it as the basis of their statement.

It was very important that the VDS should reflect the voice of whole parish, and not just that of a handful of vocal people, in order to make it eligible to influence the forthcoming development plan. The team put a questionnaire in the monthly parish magazine, *Colwall Clock*, which is widely circulated and read in the parish. They received a good response, which showed clear opposition to development: 75% against further development in the parish and 83% in favour of containing development within the existing settlement boundaries. They also contacted various organisations in and out of the parish for that purpose. After writing the first draft of the statement, they displayed the draft at the annual village horticultural show and left a copy at the village library and the village hall. They held a public consultation

to get feedback from the public. Although there were some people who were sceptical about the actual effects of the statement on the planning process, overall people were quite supportive of the idea. At the same time, however, there was an overwhelming opinion that the draft did not put enough emphasis on the prevention of any further development in Colwall.

Over the next year, the design team re-wrote the draft several times, attended a training session organised by the Countryside Agency, and talked with the

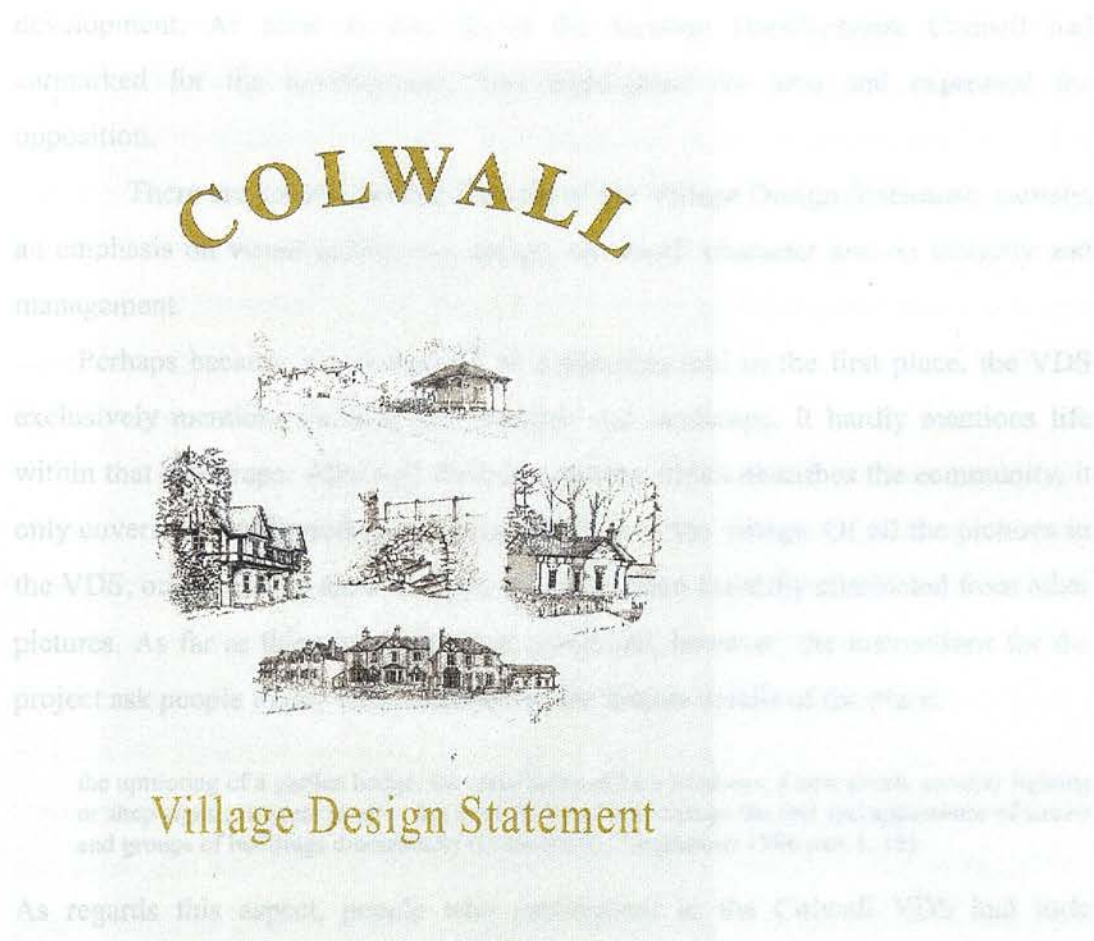


Plate 8: Colwall Village Design Statement

Forward Planning Department of the Herefordshire Council, from which they needed to get approval. During this period the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) emerged, which will be discussed below. The team inevitably had to consider the impact of the UDP and they strengthened the tendency to produce the VDS as a tool against the development, which was not the intention of the Countryside Commission.

The Commission introduced the VDS to reduce potential friction caused by development and to make the planning process smooth and swift. In other words, it seemed to be their aim to absorb or to mitigate opposition against the development and planning machines. The Commission repeatedly made it very clear that the VDS would not affect the planning authorities' decision to approve development in a certain area, which, however, was the main aim of the production of the VDS in Colwall. Colwall VDS emphasised that there was little possibility in the village for development. As soon as they found the location Herefordshire Council had earmarked for the development, they highlighted the area and expressed the opposition.

There are several notable features of the Village Design Statement; namely, an emphasis on visual quality and design, on 'local' character and on integrity and management.

Perhaps because it was devised as a planning tool in the first place, the VDS exclusively mentions building environment and landscape. It hardly mentions life within that landscape. Although there is a section which describes the community, it only covers the public and commercial facilities in the village. Of all the pictures in the VDS, only a couple are of people, who have been carefully eliminated from other pictures. As far as this visual aspect is concerned, however, the instructions for the project ask people to pay close attention to the minute details of the place.

the uprooting of a garden hedge, the installation of new windows, a new porch, security lighting or shop signs can seem small ... but over time they will change the feel and appearance of streets and groups of buildings dramatically (Countryside Commission 1996 part 1: 16)

As regards this aspect, people who participated in the Colwall VDS had little problem, since it was also their main concern. They closely followed the instruction and created what the Countryside Commission expected. They illustrated chimney styles, roof styles and fence and gate styles. Various photographs were taken; of both private and public buildings, streets and lanes, fields and meadows and landscape. However, like the Commission's instruction manual, there are few living creatures in these photographs: virtually no humans and only a flock of sheep appear in a picture of a field. The effect of this absence of life is somehow stunning, giving an impression of emptiness. But this emptiness is not the same as that produced by a

deserted settlement since none of the buildings or the features in the photographs have any trace of neglect, which, however, strengthens the lifeless impression of the place.

Of course, it is not very fair to pick up this unintentional effect of what is, after all, a well-produced document for design enhancement of their built environment, but at the same time it seems to reveal the depth of the preoccupation with appearance, to the extent that all life has been eliminated from the frame. The VDS is designed as supplementary planning guidance, and planning is a process by which a place is created which may include various other aspects of human or social life. However, physical environment, or more specifically its appearance, is singled out, given preference and detached from those who live or work in it during the process. To be fair, the Colwall VDS does include sections to describe economy, transport and community. However, those sections appear to be written in a less enthusiastic tone, with little perspective combining those social aspects with the physical environment or its design.

The preoccupation with visual quality is expressed in another way, which makes the Colwall VDS unique. A map at the end of the booklet shows important views both into and out of the village, produced as a result of a survey conducted at one of the public meetings on the VDS. The tacit aim of this map is to prevent any development which may block or spoil those views, valued so highly by the residents of Colwall. However, in addition to this practical implication, the map also shows their actual concerns. Many of the in-migrants first came to this area either as tourists or visitors and saw Colwall from the top of the hills, which fixed their image of this place. People in Colwall are very aware of the fact that their locality is viewed from the hills. This awareness is expressed in the Statement in many ways:

- It is to the village's benefit that it supports many densely wooded areas, hedgerows and individual trees, which screen much of the building. The trees, especially from April to October, provide a canopy that softens the visual impact of the settlement. There are also a number of important open views and visual gaps between developed areas that have a strategic importance and contribute to the overall balance of building and agricultural landscape.

- particular attention should be paid to the visual impact of the pattern of buildings and developments when seen looking down from the Hills and up to the Hills

(Colwall Village Society 2001: 7)

They are not just viewed but they themselves also view the surrounding countryside.

When I visited people's houses, quite a few of them showed me their favourite views, some from a kitchen others from a sitting room. Some of the windows were constructed for the views, so that the views framed by the window look like landscape paintings. There are a number of houses named after views in this area, such as Hill View and Beacon View. Naturally the Statement stresses the importance of open spaces which allow people to enjoy those views.

Another emphasis is the idea of 'local'. The principle of the VDS is that the design of a new development and building should be based on local character. The aim is to specify the local character of settlement patterns and buildings, and to set a guideline for the design of future developments or of the alteration of the appearance of the buildings in the village. There is a strong emphasis on the creation and maintenance of visual harmony in the settlement. Since the project was launched in response to criticism of standardised designs, it seems to be quite natural for the VDS to put its emphasis on 'local'.

- Modern designs in the countryside can and should be responsive to local character, reflect local building styles (Countryside Commission 1996 part 1: 8, quoted from Rural England, a Government white paper)

- Technology has largely removed the constraints on construction (eg ground conditions, locally available materials, and climate). However, just because we can build almost anywhere, with any materials, in any form, does not mean that we should (op. cit: 7)

By encouraging a local style, the Commission believed that they could enhance and maintain, or even create, sense of place. This localness and a sense of place is simply defined as an antithesis to the suburban style. In fact, the suburban style is regarded as vermin in this project, and the project itself emerged from the widespread hatred of it:

All of our countryside and villages have their own special characteristics, and all new development should work with them to reinforce local diversity, instead of spreading more suburban and standard designs. (op. cit part 2: 15)

In principle, the Colwall VDS team fully agree with this emphasis on localness, but in practice they found it difficult to specify the local distinctiveness in Colwall. As one of them pointed out, Colwall did not have a particular distinctiveness in terms of architectural design. Perhaps because of its history of relatively new settlement developed on a piecemeal basis, its size and its lack of particular local materials,

Colwall does not have a strong character, such as that found immediately in the honey-coloured Cotswolds villages or some old settlements in Herefordshire where most of the houses are black-and-white cottages. As a result, the Colwall VDS states that its distinctive character consists of mixed architectural styles from the Victorian era on. It is not very easy to identify the distinctive local character in Colwall in terms of its building designs, and some of the houses selected in the Statement can be regarded as being of a ubiquitous 'suburban' style, which the people were supposed to be against.

Instead, they sought distinctiveness in its location. It is repeatedly mentioned that the entire parish is in the Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which endorses its distinctively beautiful landscape on a national scale. This legal protection of the landscape naturally highlights the aesthetic and visual elements rather than any other aspects of the area. The ruralness of the parish is also emphasised. In other words, its distinctiveness lies in the beautiful countryside surrounding the settlement. Therefore, the Statement underlines the significance of the settlement boundaries beyond which any development should be severely discouraged. However, these boundaries are not regarded as solid walls. They are permeable in the sense that external country elements are allowed to flow in, not only in the form of view, but also in the form of open spaces and trees in the settlement area. The Statement values a gradual transition from the surrounding countryside to the settlement area, with trees and hedges which screen buildings. The settlement areas are depicted as blending in well with the surrounding countryside. The Statement alludes to the 'rural' aspects of Colwall in most sections. This ruralness in practice suggests a sense of space largely occupied by green elements. Here there is little difference between a garden lawn and pasture for grazing, or between ornamental garden trees and coppiced trees in woodland, both of which are simply regarded as elements of 'nature' which ensure Colwall's 'ruralness'⁷¹.

⁷¹According to a survey conducted by the VDS team in 1998, 73% of 141 respondents cited the pleasant countryside as a reason to move to Colwall, which was far higher than any other reason. The rural character of Colwall is expressed in another way. People including the members of the VDS team in Colwall, are quite conscious of the fact that Colwall is in Herefordshire. They often say, 'We are in Herefordshire, not in Worcestershire, you see.' What is implied in this remark is that they live in a rural county whose main industry is still agriculture. However, in everyday reality, most of them

The dominance of the Malvern Hills is another distinctive local character. In addition to the views, the hills provide another aspect to the area. Although the hills are still common land, most of the commoners have ceased exercising their grazing since the 1970s. Instead, the hills, most of which are owned by the Malvern Hills Conservators, are now one of the most popular and heavily used walking routes in West Midlands. They have always been a popular destination for daytrippers in the West Midlands, but this tendency has been accelerated since the 1970s. Especially during summer weekends, a great number of walkers on the ridges are clearly seen from the settlement area, and the traffic becomes quite heavy. These elements remind people of the amenities or recreational value provided by their locality. This value benefits only the visitors but also the residents. The Statement stresses the importance of maintaining the existing public footpath network in the parish⁷². By doing so, the Statement confirms the amenities or recreational value of the surrounding area. Furthermore, promoting the use of these footpaths or encouraging walking around the surrounding countryside also stresses the permeableness of the boundaries.

The last category of emphasis is unity and management. The VDS's main aim is to integrate local people and their opinions into the planning process. The guidance pamphlet stresses that the VDS creates a way for local people to express their views and thus influence the planning authorities' decisions on both the development and conservation of their physical environment. However, this channel is not created entirely for the benefit of local people, as it appears to be at first glance.

- A VDS enables local people to make a positive contribution to the development debate, rather than having to rely on protest and a NIMBY stance to make their view heard (op.cit: 10).
- A VDS can shorten the process of planning negotiation and application by reducing conflict and NIMBY responses and it encourages villagers to take a positive view of development (do.).

It repeatedly emphasises the importance of co-operation between a local VDS team

depend more on the Worcestershire side, which is just on the other side of the hills, rather than on the Herefordshire side, and few of them have anything to do with agriculture. A planning officer of Herefordshire Council once told me that people in Colwall face Worcester and further east, not Hereford and that they should actually belong to Worcestershire.

⁷² The parish council had previously published its own footpath map, and recently produced a circular walking route to commemorate its late clerk, in collaboration with the AONB office. In these maps, local history is referred to and scenic viewpoints are pointed out.

and a local planning authority⁷³. It also emphasises that the VDS will influence the planning process only when it achieves the status of Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG). To achieve SPG status, a VDS has to be approved by a local planning authority. Although the guidance states that a planning authority can only comment and advise on a VDS, one of the members of the Colwall VDS team complained that they actually checked every single line of the draft written by the local people in Colwall's case. He also complained that Herefordshire Planning would not accept any direct criticism of their planning policy. Planning officers of Herefordshire explained to me that they could only work within the framework of the planning law, and therefore they could not give a VDS SPG status if it went beyond that framework. Perhaps from the viewpoint of a planning authority, this emphasis on integrity expresses their desire to improve the efficiency of the planning process and to tighten their control over the management of their jurisdiction. The repetitive use of the word NIMBY, which is a very negative expression conjuring up an image of a bunch of narrow-minded selfish people, in the booklet seems to be based on this desire to suppress local people's wish to control their own environment. From the viewpoint of the local residents, however, the VDS should be the channel to express their concerns and to take some control over the management of their locality, which, however, does not always happen in reality. They have to blur their opinions and use indirect ways to express their views in order to receive approval from a planning authority⁷⁴.

Another aspect of unity is the unity of local people. The guidance emphasised that a VDS should represent the view of the whole community. Furthermore, the Colwall VDS stresses that it represents the view of the village as a whole. However, as I mentioned above, the voice of farming and landed interests is perhaps poorly represented. The guidance singles out farmers and landowners and

⁷³ When the Colwall team completed their VDS, a planning officer made a comment in a local newspaper: 'It is a partnership approach we are looking for rather than the parish going off and doing its own thing' (*Malvern Gazette*, 26 October 2001)

⁷⁴ In Colwall's case, they wanted the planning department to adopt their statement at first and lobbied hard to achieve that. However, at that time Herefordshire Council's policy on the VDS was endorsement rather than adoption, which means that they will refer to the document but do not have to reflect it in their plans or assessment of planning applications. However, the council is currently reviewing the policy and will probably adopt the VDS as an SPG in the future.

treats them as if they are not members of the community.

Changing agricultural techniques have probably altered the appearance of the countryside more than any other factor ... Farmers and land managers need to be encouraged to consider the way that their activities, such as hedgerow management or the siting of new farm buildings and storage areas, affect the setting of the village (op.cit: 17).

The same tenor is also found in the Colwall VDS.

Currently agricultural landownership is in the hands of a few families who own the greatest part of the non-developed land in the parish and its neighbourhood. With the current poor economic outlook for the agricultural industry, this situation may change. Pressure to alter farming practices is increasing; new practices could potentially have a detrimental impact on Colwall's environment (Colwall Village Society 2001: 18).

Here, they are described as a potential hazard to the locality rather than members of the community. In other words, farmers and landowners are set aside as a different category in the process, which, however, does not mean that the Colwall VDS team deliberately excluded farms and landowners from the process. They did not show any interest in the project. This is an extension of everyday reality in Colwall. There is little contact between those who migrated from somewhere else and those who work on land or possess the land. The migrated people can perhaps recognise farmers and landowners by name or sight, but in many cases that is all they know. They do not know or are not interested in what is going on in the fields. However, they have a clear expectation for farmers and landowners, which is to maintain the landscape.

Every encouragement should be given to landowners and farmers in their stewardship of the precious environment heritage (op. cit: 26).

Another group of people who were not included in the process are those who live in ex-council houses and social housing. Again, they were not intentionally excluded from the project, but they showed little interest in this largely middle-class activity. According to a random interview with the residents of that housing, most of them were not even aware of the project. It seems to be that this document-making activity and those who are actively involved in the project are quite alien to them. They were also, however, quite hostile to the recent and further development in the parish and expressed their support for the project even though they did not know who was responsible for it and what form it took.

After long negotiations with the planning authority, the Colwall VDS finally

received endorsement from Herefordshire Council in April 2001. It was published in October with grants from the Malvern Hills AONB and other organisations and each member of the Society was given the copy as a free gift.

3.5 Unitary Development Plan

In March 2000, people in Colwall started to hear the term UDP used rather frequently as some ominous sign coming from outside of the village. UDP stands for Unitary Development Plan, a document written by Herefordshire Council. It is a statutory requirement for the council to prepare such a document, under the terms of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, and after the 1997 local government re-organisation, the newly created Herefordshire Council began to produce it. The aim of the plan is to establish a framework for a land use policy in the county to direct and control development during the period from 1996 to 2011. The plan itself has been written by the council but the main framework was developed from national and regional guidance in the form of the PPG12 [Planning Policy Guidance note 12 (Development Plan)] and the RPG 11 [Regional Planning Guidance 11 (the West Midlands)]. The PPG was written by central Government and the RPG was written by the Government Office for the West Midlands. In other words, the main framework was provided by central Government.

The UDP covers every aspect of development in Herefordshire from employment to environmental issues, but it is housing development that would affect Colwall the most. The 1997 revised version of the RPG 11 suggested that 16,500 new dwellings would be necessary in Herefordshire from 1991 to 2011. By 1996, 4800 houses had already been built, so that remaining 11,700 houses is the target set by the UDP. However, another 4,900 houses are already committed in development plans or existing planning permissions and 3,450 houses would be built in windfall sites, so the UDP has to find a location for 3,450 houses somewhere in the county.

From a very early stage, the parish council and some residents in Colwall have been deeply concerned about the UDP, especially about the potential housing

development within the parish. When the parish council in August 1999 invited planning officers of Herefordshire Council to hear information on the UDP at a public meeting, 50 people turned out in addition to parish councillors. They heard that the UDP planned to allocate houses in 'sustainable settlements', which means settlements that already have sufficient infrastructure to hold further population. An officer estimated that Colwall needed some 56 houses, including 42 affordable houses simply to meet local housing needs. After the explanation, the officers were bombarded by questions from the floor. How it is possible to build that number of houses without changing the settlement boundaries drawn by the Malvern Hills District Council? Are local housing needs really that high? How to cover the cost of building affordable houses? Is the council prepared to renovate the already overstretched infrastructure of the parish? The officers were overwhelmed by these questions which were, in practice, expressions of strong objection against the housing development.

The first draft of the plan was written in December 1999 and circulated to parish councils in the county. Colwall parish council produced a letter to parishioners in response, which was titled *Colwall New Town?*, at the end of March:

The Parish Council believes that the unitary authority wants to see at least 40-50 houses built in Colwall and that most will be affordable homes ... Who will provide them? Will it be the housing associations or private builders? If the latter, a huge number of extra houses - several hundred - will be needed to cover the subsidy to affordable housing ... A lack of development land in the village would mean building on a greenfield site or farm land in the Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, creating an alien roofscape blighting the Arcadian vista (*Malvern Gazette*: 31 March 2000)

At this stage the draft itself did not specify the allocation of the number of houses or their location. The parish council therefore wrote this pamphlet based mainly on speculation. However, the council sent this letter to every household in Colwall. The local newspaper also reported on the document, with the title 'Council fears new homes will "overwhelm" village' (*Malvern Gazette/Ledbury Reporter*: 31 March 2000).

The second draft was written in July 2000, and this time Herefordshire Council held a meeting to announce it to representatives from parish councils. At the July parish council meeting, the chairman reported on what he had heard in the

meeting, which was almost confirmation of their earlier speculation. He said that Herefordshire Council was searching for a suitable location for 480 houses over its 48 rural parishes, and most of those houses were to be affordable or social housing. Although the council did not tell him the exact number of houses which they tried to allocate in Colwall, he estimated that the UDP would probably force 70 to 80 houses upon Colwall, since it is located in what they call a 'transport corridor' where the council wants to concentrate its development. Resentment was immediately expressed by the councillors. The chairman said that the council did not give a copy of the plan to the parish councils nor did they tell them the exact location they had earmarked for the development. So, at this stage things were still uncertain but there was palpable anger against Herefordshire Council and a real determination to stop the development.

Most of the 15 councillors were in-migrants of relatively longstanding. None of them had any farming interests or substantial property in the parish. They were either retired or were commuters to nearby towns.

After the summer holiday and just a week before the September meeting, the parish council held a public meeting on the UDP at the village hall. Well over 100 people attended⁷⁵. Again, at the beginning the chairman explained the situation, of which by this time most of the villagers were aware. However, this time the parish council had a location plan from Herefordshire Council, at which everyone expressed surprise since the area marked on the map was much larger than what people had expected⁷⁶. Someone immediately pointed out that 300 houses could possibly be built in the area, which could completely alter the settlement. The chairman explained the parish council's view that any further development in Colwall was too much. He then asked people's opinions. Lots of hands shot up. People expressed their opinions one after another. There was not a single opinion which supported the development in any sense. The meeting was very lively and again there was an atmosphere of unity to

⁷⁵ Few people usually attend the parish council meeting.

⁷⁶ All eight plots earmarked in the plan were located within the boundaries of Colwall Stone. All of them were voluntarily offered for development by landowners all of whom live in or near Colwall. The planning department therefore just showed all the offered plots from the local people in the map as possible sites for development. However, the audience took it that the planning department chose the plots and forced a large-scale development on Colwall.

fight against the threat imposed from outside.

Most of the people who attended the meeting were rather elderly people in their sixties or older, with some members of the younger generation. As far as I was aware, there were few people from a farming or landed background at the meeting. Some were relatively long-term residents, and some were recent in-migrants. Quite a few were either vocal or active members of the locality.

Opinions were varied, but most fell into three categories. The first of these comprised objections based on the practical problems which the development would cause to the infrastructure, such as schools, a surgery, sewerage and roads, all of which had already been used almost to their full capacity.

The second category of opinion was based on conservation matters, especially on the design of houses and views from and to the village. Quite a few people mentioned a recent development in Colwall. Brookmill Close, where 32 houses including seven social houses were built, a rather unpopular development in Colwall. Later, the parish council summarised the opinions:

recent building within the parish which has been totally out of keeping with the rest of the parish and totally at variance with what should be permitted in an AONB ... Two sites in particular have harsh and strident red brick and no softening trees, errors which should never again be perpetrated on such a lovely corner of England (Colwall Parish Council: minutes of the public meeting).

The houses in Brookmill Close are regarded by many residents as too 'suburban'. They are often described as 'repetitive estate architecture' or houses built with 'un-suitable' building materials. In fact, the architect of this development is said to have taken the 1930s houses in Colwall as a model for the development, in order to make it in keeping with the village architecture, but few people noticed or appreciated the effort. There had also been concern about the way planning permission was given to the landowner, who happened to be the chairman of the parish council at that time. At the meeting, the relationship between landowners and the planning authority was questioned.

Colwall's location in the AONB was repeatedly mentioned, although few people were sure where exactly its boundaries were. They insisted that the AONB should tighten up its planning policy. 'An urban sprawl visible from the Hills would completely wreck the centre of the AONB' was a comment heard. Many people

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Opinions were varied, but most fell into three categories. The first of these comprised objections based on the practical problems which the development would cause to the infrastructure, such as schools, a surgery, sewerage and roads, all of which had already been used almost to their full capacity.

The second category of opinion was based on conservation matters, especially on the design of houses and views from and to the village. Quite a few people mentioned a recent development in Colwall. Brookmill Close, where 32 houses including seven social houses were built, a rather unpopular development in Colwall. Later, the parish council summarised the opinions:

recent building within the parish which has been totally out of keeping with the rest of the parish and totally at variance with what should be permitted in an AONB ... Two sites in particular have harsh and strident red brick and no softening trees, errors which should never again be perpetrated on such a lovely corner of England (Colwall Parish Council: minutes of the public meeting).

The houses in Brookmill Close are regarded by many residents as too 'suburban'. They are often described as 'repetitive estate architecture' or houses built with 'un-suitable' building materials. In fact, the architect of this development is said to have taken the 1930s houses in Colwall as a model for the development, in order to make it in keeping with the village architecture, but few people noticed or appreciated the effort. There had also been concern about the way planning permission was given to the landowner, who happened to be the chairman of the parish council at that time. At the meeting, the relationship between landowners and the planning authority was questioned.

Colwall's location in the AONB was repeatedly mentioned, although few people were sure where exactly its boundaries were. They insisted that the AONB should tighten up its planning policy. 'An urban sprawl visible from the Hills would completely wreck the centre of the AONB' was a comment heard. Many people

referred to the view from the Hills, which was enjoyed by 1.5 million visitors a year. People in the village are well aware of the fact that their locality is always viewed from the hills. They are also quite sensitive about the views from Colwall of the surrounding hills. Any development would not be suitable in Colwall since it would destroy the visual harmony.

Another issue in this category is the sense of village. 'Colwall is large, but it's still a rural village. If you add that number of houses, it will become a small town.', was another comment from the floor. How to describe Colwall is a rather difficult issue, which depends on residents' individual experiences there. Few people usually call Colwall a rural village without some reservation. However, in this context of development, it became a rather important point that Colwall was perceived as a village. As expressed in the title of the report, *Colwall New Town?*, issued earlier by the parish council, to become a town, or to be called as such, was perceived as an ever more serious threat to their lives.

The third category of opinions expressed at the meeting concerned the local/outsider distinction. Again, from this extract from the parish council's summary of the meeting:

There is disenchantment with the fact that although Colwall already has a high proportion of affordable housing, recent additions to the affordable housing stock have been used to house people from well outside the area rather than families working in the village or families with a long association with the village ... A rigorous policy of identifying and housing such local people would be the only possible justification of increasing the number of houses in Colwall (do.).

This claim would be in keeping with the UDP guidelines, which stated that 'provision of housing generally within the rural areas and smaller settlements would only be to meet directly-generated local needs'. Both the claim made by Colwall people and the official statement appreciate the idea of a relatively exclusive closed community evolving with 'natural' intrinsic growth. However, as the housing needs survey conducted by Herefordshire Council later revealed, a quarter of the population in Colwall had moved there within the past five years, and half the population within the past 15 years. This distinction between locals and outsiders cannot be clearly defined in Colwall. Most of those attending the meeting seemed to oppose the influx of outsiders, but who the outsiders were depended entirely on who 'you' were and

when 'you' came. There had been a certain amount of mild hostility toward what they call executive houses which had been built over the past 15 years, and most of which were bought by people from 'outside', some of whom attended the meeting. Opinions such as 'any further development should be affordable housing strictly for those with a village connection' seem to reflect that sentiment.

The meeting closed after the heated exchange of opinions. The parish council promised to forward all the opinions expressed in the meeting to Herefordshire Council Forward Planning Department and also to demand that the planning department conduct a housing needs survey to quantify actual local need for affordable houses.

Meanwhile, the parish council pursued another measure to prevent further development within the parish. They had contacted Herefordshire Council's conservation officers and had asked them to consider designating part of the settlement as a Conservation Area⁷⁷, to which the Council responded positively. After negotiation and an assessment of the proposal, the Council agreed to designate a part of Colwall, the area where large 19th century houses stand in large plots, as a Conservation Area. They had written a character statement of the proposed area and came to Colwall, first to a monthly parish council meeting in January 2001, and then to a public meeting in February which attracted around 70 people, to hear residents' opinions on it. In both cases, the officers were warmly welcomed. In their explanation, officers repeatedly described the area using the word 'rural'. They also emphasised the density of the trees, which creates the sense of enclosure and intimacy. Since most of the buildings in the proposed area were built during the same period, they pointed out that the area has a sense of harmony and continuity. The views to and from the Hills were also referred to as a reason for the selection. On the whole, the explanation and description pleased the audience. What the audience asked in response mainly concerned how much protection from potential development the designation would give to the area. The officers stressed that the

⁷⁷ Conservation Areas are statutory recognised areas of special architectural and historic interest. This concept was introduced by the Civic Amenities Act 1967, but the number of designations has recently increased dramatically. Once designated, stricter planning control is applied to preserve the character of the designated area.

designation did not mean the end of development but planning applications relating both to the area within the boundaries and adjacent areas would be assessed more carefully, especially as regards their design and appearance, with the character of the area as a whole being given due consideration. People who lived in other areas in Colwall asked the officers to consider including their areas as well. The officers did not dismiss the possibility, but an immediate extension was considered unlikely.

In both meetings, there was a tacit understanding among the audience that the designation of the Conservation Area was part of the protest against the potential development brought by the UDP. However, in addition to the natural reaction to the immediate threat, there had been a desire to keep Colwall intact as it was then, in terms of its physical appearance. One of the parish councillors, who was born and bred in Colwall, commented later in a local newspaper:

It will go a long way to keeping Colwall as it is ... We asked for it to be considered because we saw houses with large grounds in parts of the village having other buildings built next to them ... We felt we had to do something, as we feel the large grounds these houses were set in play a large part in Colwall being an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty ... We see this as a starting point. (*Malvern Gazette*: 20 July 2001)

As I conducted a random household survey, I repeatedly heard of this desire to keep the settlement as it was, with views being expressed by every section of Colwall, from a teenage student to an old age pensioner, from an accountant who lives in a large house within a large plot to a man who lives in a local housing association property who does various oddjobs to make living, from an old woman who has lived whole her life in Colwall to a young mother who moved to Colwall three years ago. Regardless of their backgrounds, they supported strict planning control to maintain the current shape of the settlement. Therefore naturally the idea of the Conservation Area appealed to the residents. Even the people whose property would be included in the proposed area generally supported the idea.

Returning to the UDP, two days after the public meeting for the Conservation Area, two planning officers were invited to the monthly meeting of the parish council to report on the result of the housing needs survey demanded by the parish council. The small room was packed with members of the general public including the members of the VDS team, a reporter from a local newspaper and an AONB officer, both of whom were invited by the parish council.

At first, a statistician from Herefordshire Council explained the result of the survey. She described Colwall as 'unique', since it is large in terms of both its size and population but its working population (age 16-59: 48%) is well below the county average (53%) (the retired population [age over 60: 32%] is higher than the average [25%]). Moreover, the population in the higher council tax band is significantly larger than the county average. Hope End ward, to which Colwall belongs together with three other surrounding small parishes, is in 40th place in the county deprivation league table of 44 wards, and regarding income it is in 26th place. In other words, Colwall was characterised as a well-off retired people's settlement.

The survey showed that Colwall had a very high percentage of owner-occupied property and few rented dwellings. And as the large number of members of the higher council-tax band showed, the cost of housing in Colwall was higher than anywhere else in Herefordshire. An average three-bedroom semi-detached cottage costs more than £ 120,000 and most of the properties are valued at more than a quarter of a million pounds while affordable houses in this area are considered to be up to £ 50,000 through a housing association or up to £ 90,000 at open market. Forty-six people out of the 119 reported people who had left Colwall within the past two years stated the lack of suitable housing as their reason for leaving⁷⁸.

The statistician then reported on the housing needs in Colwall. She said that 61 out of 104 respondents, who indicated the need for new accommodation within the next five years, expressed a desire to stay in Colwall, and 32 of these required affordable housing. These 32 dwellings would form basis of the development plan in Colwall. However, she continued, the planning department should consider unplanned needs such as those caused by a relationship breakdown or those who did not respond to the survey.

After the analysis of the survey, the other planning officer took over and revealed a plan for housing development in Colwall, which proposed to build 95 houses in two adjoining plots across Walwyn Road, which currently separates

⁷⁸ The report was made by remaining family members in Colwall. Other reasons were: employment (26), further education (26), marriage (6), other (15).

Colwall Stone and Colwall Green, and which were mentioned specifically in the VDS as 'green lungs' with a photograph. The officer explained the Council's and the national policy for housing development in rural areas. He stressed the sustainability of the development, which implies concentrating or containing development in larger settlements with public transport, social facilities and local employment opportunities. Colwall satisfies all the requirements. Therefore, from the planners' point of view, it was quite reasonable to allocate more houses to Colwall than to other settlements in the county. Their survey, which mentioned local demands, justified their proposal.

However, the audience was not at all convinced by the explanation. After the talk they bombarded the officers with questions. In addition to the questions raised at previous meetings, they attacked the estimation of local needs by which the Council tried to justify their proposal. They said that the estimated number may be too large, and pointed out that most of the houses recently built in Colwall as affordable houses were actually taken by 'outsiders'. The officer replied that a scale of economy needed to be applied when building affordable houses, which means that 15 to 20 houses must be built for every few affordable houses that represent the average local needs at a particular time. As a result, people from outside tended to get places. One of the parish councillors pointed out that every time they built affordable houses people from outside came and took them, but local people were turned down by the housing association as a result of means-testing, and therefore there are permanent demands for affordable houses in Colwall. This issue of 'outsiders' was further pursued by a letter to Herefordshire Council later produced by the parish council. They pointed out that houses sold on the open market as affordable houses were not really affordable for first time buyers since their prices reflected the property prices in Colwall which are much higher than those in surrounding areas. As a result, those houses were bought by 'outsiders'.

Another councillor brought up the issue of the AONB. He asked the Council to carry out an environmental impact study on the development. He said that Colwall was in the middle of the AONB, which was recently accorded the same importance as national parks by the Government, so that any large development should consider that factor. However, the AONB officer who attended the meeting commented that

he did not regard this scale of housing development large enough to damage the environment in the AONB. The chairman immediately mitigated the impact of this comment and swiftly moved to another subject. Despite this unexpected backfire, the parish council to refer to the central location of Colwall in the AONB and its national importance, which was the first item of their long letter to Herefordshire Council. This development would destroy the views enjoyed by both Colwall residents and visitors from all over the country.

At one point, one of the officers unguardedly mentioned that Colwall could be a 'market town'. It was a simple slip of the tongue but reaction from the packed audience was immediate and their shock and anger was palpable. They took it as proof that Herefordshire Council was trying to make Colwall a 'New Town'.

After the rollercoaster ride lasting almost one hour the officers were released from the meeting and the parish council moved on to its usual monthly business. Two days later, the report of the meeting was in the local newspaper, entitled *Fears Plan Will Create New Town*, in which the possible influx of people from outside and the 'townisation' of Colwall was mentioned (*Malvern Gazette*: 2 March 2001). The parish council wasted no time in producing a 12-page letter opposing the plans and sent it to Herefordshire Council. The letter systematically analysed the results of the housing needs survey in detail and undermined the Council's claim with sound arguments.

After due consideration, Herefordshire Council found it too difficult to push forward their plan and withdrew it altogether. They instead proposed a small-scale development of around 20 houses in a different site, which was agreed by the parish council.

Part II

Chapter 4: Writing a Place

4.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I shall focus on persons' passion for the past. In the previous two chapters, and especially in Chapter 2, I described people's serious involvement with local history. In Dymock, encouraged by a newly-appointed vicar who had first 'discovered' a remarkable episode in the local history, a woman began to raise local, and unwittingly national, awareness of Dymock's history by assembling exhibition displays and by making local maps featuring the poets. The vicar's intention was to use this as a catalyst to unite the divided community, while the woman just wanted to help the church. However, it soon became her obsession and her enthusiasm gradually involved other persons through other local projects, namely the footpath reinstatement project and the heritage preservation campaign. With the help of another woman who later moved into the area, the half-forgotten local history is now firmly established and well-known cherished local knowledge. In Colwall, a group of people who formed the Village Society started to research and write local histories, not those of national interest but histories of their own surroundings, such as a history of old families, institutions, buildings and areas. They publish booklets, give talks, interview elderly people and record them, collect old pictures and artefacts, and build an archive with all these materials.

Both cases are relatively recent phenomena, and those who actively participated in them were mainly in-migrants of various lengths of residence. Most of them do not have direct personal connections to the subjects they are involved in except for the fact that they happened to move into the locality. Nevertheless, these almost chance encounters with the localities led them to spend a significant amount of time and energy researching and writing local histories.

These examples are hardly unique of these localities but can probably be observed in every settlement in England. This passion for the past, or elevated and conspicuous historical consciousness, has been the subject of academic and

journalistic debate since the mid-1980s, especially after the publication of influential works by Wright (1985) and Hewison (1987), both of which were produced during the heyday of the Thatcherite era, especially during the post Falkland War period, when conservative values and right-wing policies engulfed the whole nation⁷⁹. The term 'heritage' became the keyword of the debate. As Hewison pointed out, this term was used with a very loose definition, so it could be applied to anything that has the slightest connection with the past (1987:31). Furthermore, this 'heritage' is often used with the adjective 'national'. Because of the background, most of the debate on 'heritage' has been conducted in close connection with issues of nationalism and national identity. Wright, for instance, highlighted the role of the vernacular and informal historical consciousness in everyday life, which was discussed within the framework of the British national imagination (op.cit: 5).

The passion for the past I observed in semi-rural England, however, does not have much to do with the nation or with national identity. Their attentions were focused on a particular locality rather than abstract national space. Their approaches and motivations were more personal than collective. In other words, what they sought to build by excavating local history was not a sense of belongingness to a particular group but a personal connection to a locality in which they choose to live.

In the following, I shall first present two more ethnographic examples of persons' involvement with local history, which show different forms of involvement with the past. Then I shall briefly refer to the recent rise of interest in 'local distinctiveness', which became a buzzword and a fashionable cultural policy of pursuit among local authorities, the tourism industry and various other organisations. I shall also describe the activities of a small but influential charity which made a great contribution to the rise of interest in what is 'local'. Their activities did not directly influence what happened in Dymock and Colwall, but my description will provide a wider context for understanding activities that took place there. Attention to local history is at the core of the search for local distinctiveness. However, there are two quite different approaches to the local past, namely memory and history.

⁷⁹ The frenzy of the period led Marxist historians of the History Workshop group to conduct a comprehensive study of patriotism and British national identity (Samuel 1989). Hewison's work is also heavily influenced by Wiener's highly negative assessment of the influence of the past (Wiener 1981).

Moreover, there are two different groups of persons who use these two channels to relate to the local past. I shall examine both these two channels used to deal with the past and also those who use them. In the final section I shall focus on the particular approach taken by those who move into the locality later in their lives.

4.2. Enactment of history

4.2.1. Malvern Water Heritage

On a fine Saturday morning in September, a small number of people, typically between five and 10 women and children, gathered here and there at various points around the Malvern Hills. They brought lots of seasonal flowers, fruits and greenery along with paintings and coloured paper. They were decorating nearby springs, wells, fountains and spouts for the annual well decorating competition. Some were from local organisations, such as Women's Institutes and a Garden Club, others were friends who happened to live near those water features. They were decorating their local water features around this year's theme of 'purity', which was suggested by an organiser of this event.

The Malvern area has always been known for its famous water. Malvern Water, which enjoys national, and international to some extent, fame as the Queen's favourite water, has been bottled and sold since 1851 when Schweppes supplied the Great Exhibition with water from Malvern. However, its reputation goes further back (Smith 1964: 171-236). A document shows that water in Malvern was locally believed to cure disease, especially painful or weak eyes, as early as 1622. This local reputation had gradually spread during the 18th century, and especially after 1757 when a local physician and apothecary published his analysis of water from various springs and wells in Malvern, which proclaimed its exceptional purity. By the end of the century, bottled water from Malvern was sold in London. Due to the efforts of shrewd hoteliers and the lord of the manor, Malvern had gradually built up its reputation as a spa resort among polite society. Because of this reputation, two



Plate9: Well decorations in progress at Evendine spout in Colwall

doctors, inspired by hydropathy, which had been invented by Vincent Priessnitz in Silesia, decided to practice hydropathy in Malvern in 1842. This enterprise turned out to be a huge success and Malvern established its status as a Victorian spa resort for the water cure, which attracted people like Gladstone, Dickens, Carlyle, Tennyson, Darwin and Nightingale. Although the fad did not last long and had ceased by the mid-1870s, the town had developed tremendously during this period of time, which left numerous architectural legacies and monuments around the hills. However, these 'heritages' had quietly turned into a familiar background of everyday life to which people ceased to pay much attention, and knowledge of them has been forgotten.

The commercial enterprise of Coca-Cola Schweppes has kept the association between Malvern and water on a national level, and local people always take water from nearby springs and spouts. A local GP wrote of his surprise when he faced local people's belief about the healing properties of Malvern water in the 1960s:

In 1963, within weeks of arriving in Malvern as a general practitioner, I was called out to Malvern Wells, where an old man was lying in a dim, gas-lit room with dark chocolate brown painted walls.

As I examined the patient in the gloom, his daughter came in, carrying a bottle of water. Before she saw me she called out, 'Here you are, Dad, here's some water from the Holy Well. This will make you better!' To someone trained for ten years in twentieth century hospital medicine, this assertion surprised me and I was left wondering if I was back in the Middle Ages (Harcup 1992: preface).

Perhaps the girl's comment was not as serious as he made out, but it is true that local people 'take water' to this day. At some popular spouts, queues form on weekend mornings. People bring scores of large plastic bottles to fill for the week's supply. These places are informal meeting points. People, typically families with children, are relaxed and cheerful. They normally exchange casual conversation with fellow water-takers, reassuring each other how lucky they are to have this excellent water for free⁸⁰.

Although water and people are closely connected in the Malvern area, most people simply collect the water without much knowledge or reflection. It is a rather mechanical part of the routine of everyday life. Some of the springs and spouts have been reduced to sorry states by years of negligence.

This situation started to change in the early 1990s. People in the local tourism industry and the district council realised Malvern's water history could be a potential resource to stimulate the area's tourism. The Malvern Spa Tourism Association was set up in 1992, which, however, collapsed four years later because of bad management, and the district council organised a Victorian Water Cure Weekend in 1992. However, these early attempts were less than satisfactory. It was two local women's involvement and enthusiasm that turned things around and raised people's awareness.

One of them is Diana, who was born near London and moved into Malvern because of her husband's job in 1978. She used to be a history teacher at a junior school but spent her early days in Malvern raising her young children. When the children went to school, she began to join various local societies, but found it very difficult to fit in. She told me that many educated, middle-class in-migrants, who

⁸⁰ In one case, water collecting at a spout has also linked people internationally. A couple who have collected water at their nearby spout, which happens to be the most popular point, for more than 30 years thought up the idea of connecting the water-collecting in Malvern to a water aid project in South Asia. They started asking fellow water collectors to donate 2p a litre in order to raise funds to purchase water filters for a health centre in a mountain village in Pakistan which they had visited. This project was successful, which encouraged them to continue raising funds. With the advice of a charity WaterAid, they now raise funds for digging wells in South India.

typically work for either public schools or the DERA, did not find the place very comfortable. She then resumed her old interest in history - this time the local history of Malvern. After taking an evening class on local history, she started to write various pamphlets featuring well-known figures associated with the Malvern area, and published them at her own cost. In this way, she gradually got involved with the local history circle, including museums and the civic society.

Through the museum, she started to give guided tours and talks, while wearing the costume of a Victorian school mistress. At the same time she developed her interest in Malvern's water history which had been long neglected. She published a pamphlet on the water cure in 1991. Furthermore, the guided tour on water history in Malvern became one of her specialities. At a public meeting of the Malvern Spa Tourism Association, she was introduced to Colin, a geographer specialising in mineral water heritage. Together they agreed to make a comprehensive list and description of all the existing water features around the Malvern Hills, of which there are around 100, and to publish it as a guidebook. This booklet on the springs and spouts of Malvern captured people's imagination and turned out to be a local bestseller. She said that local people appreciated their work since it made them aware of the valuable presence of something they had taken so much for granted. They later published a more detailed and thorough study of water features in Malvern. This involved visiting all the known springs, spouts, wells and fountains. They took photographs, recorded exact locations, and described current states in detail, which were compiled along with historical records and anecdotes that they found in libraries and record offices.

Because of these activities, the district council sought her advice for the annual weekend event to raise local awareness of its water heritage. She suggested well-decorating, which, as she found in old records, had taken place in the Malvern area from the late 19th century up to the First World War. The council adopted the idea of reviving the event, which started in 1993 on a very small scale of five entries. Since then, the event has continued sporadically until the present day. Diana has been involved as an organiser of the event.

In 1999, another driving force in raising the awareness of Malvern's water

history joined the project. A sculptor, Sylvia, who was brought up in Malvern and who recently returned there from London after a long absence, got involved with the project and galvanised people in her typically energetic way. However, her involvement with Malvern's water heritage began prior to this event. After studying art in London and Paris, she had spent most of her life in London as an artist and seldom came back to Malvern. However, having lost all the people closest to her including her husband, within five years and having had a serious motorbike accident herself, she somehow drifted back to Malvern feeling somewhat lost. Her initial intention was to take time to recover and to rebuild her life, but soon she found herself wanting to work there in creating something for the locality. She called it site-specific art, an artwork for a particular place.

Her previous experience in Calgary where she organised an exhibition based on her conversation with native Canadians had given her a strong awareness of the link between people and place, connected by the past. She applied this experience, along with her personal interest in myths and legends, to creating her site-specific art in Malvern. From the very beginning 'water' was the theme since it is what Malvern has been known for. She started to collect materials to gain inspiration for her project, visited springs and spouts and recorded their locations on a map, and researched myths, legends and historical facts about the water of Malvern. She also visited elderly people to hear their memories of water. At the same time she made a proposal to the district council to create a sculpture trail featuring 14 springs around the town, to honour and re-evaluate the water heritage of the town. After strenuous negotiation with the reluctant council, in 1998 she succeeded in placing one sculpture at the centre of the town. The sculpture, which was named 'Malvhina', was created according to three themes proposed by local residents: ancient Celtic standing stones with spiral markings, medieval religious statuary, and Victorian Pre-Raphaelite imagery. All three periods are supposed to be important periods of the town, and water spouts out from the centre of the round shield held by a solemnly mythical or religious female figure. It immediately became a popular water collecting point both for tourists and residents.

She continued to create sculptures in order to raise public awareness of the

water's links with the town's past. In 2000, she created another water feature, again in the centre of the town, which was a gigantic fountain of four crudely cut granite pillars to celebrate the centenary of Edward Elgar's *Enigma Variation* that was composed in Malvern. The Enigma Fountain is accompanied by a life-size bronze statue of the composer which leans on the rail next to the fountain. There are no obstacles around the statue, so that people can touch it or stand by it and appreciate the splendid view of the vale of Evesham while listening to the sound of water from the fountain. Although Elgar is the most famous person who has ever lived in Malvern, there had not been any official recognition of this fact. Sylvia's fountain and statue clearly inscribed the historical fact at the very centre of the town in a dramatic way.

While she created these sculptures, another development about the history of the water took place. Stimulated by a gradual increase of interest in the water, a successful retired businessman, who had served as a councillor on the district council, put a letter of appeal in the local newspaper to form an organisation dedicated to the promotion of Malvern's water heritage. In addition to those who were interested in the topics including Diana and Sylvia, representatives of various local organisations and business came to the meeting. And thus the Malvern Spa Association was created in 1999. It was a curious amalgamation of interests. There were people from the Civic Society and the CPRE whose main interest is the conservation of historical buildings, monuments and the environment. There were also those who belonged to the local business circle, such as hotel owners and managers of estates and commercial enterprises whose main interest was expanding their business opportunities by promoting the water heritage. There were also amateur enthusiasts, interested in either local history or water. Together they established the aim of the society: to conserve and restore springs, spouts, fountains and wells in the Malvern area, while at the same time promoting the study of and raising public awareness of Malvern's water heritage.

Through this Association, Sylvia became involved with well-decorating in 2000. Both Diana and Sylvia have been active members of the Association. Once involved, she galvanised local people into joining the event. As a result, the number

of entries in the event increased dramatically to 18. Sylvia herself decorated her own creation, Malvhina. Unlike its famous counterpart in Derbyshire, Malvern's well-decorating does not have any religious background. Persons simply bring seasonal flowers and greenery and decorate the neighbourhood water features in their own ways. They spend Saturday mornings decorating springs and spouts and chatting with friends who come and go at their convenience. However, the result is remarkable. Springs, spouts, fountains and wells, all these water features are taken so much for granted in everyday life. In other words, they are so deeply merged with the landscape so as to become almost invisible. The simple act of decoration makes all these water features stand out from their surroundings and renders them visible, in a subtle way.

The same year Diana started a guided coach tour around the decorated water features with Colin, both of whom dressed up in Victorian costumes. Participants in the tour, who were mostly elderly people living in the area, were encouraged to drink water from each spring and spout and to experience the difference between each one. At each stop, Diana and Colin gave the historical background and anecdotes relating to the springs and spouts. People were delighted to 'discover' so many 'hidden' water heritages in their neighbourhood and to learn about them. The whole event received considerable coverage in the local newspaper.

With this rising awareness of Malvern's water heritage, the Spa Association joined a consortium of local conservation bodies in order to apply to the Heritage Lottery Fund for funding to restore some of the water features in Malvern. They successfully received almost a quarter of a million pounds for that purpose in 2002. In addition to the restoration of nine water features, they are planning to install interpretation boards by the features to provide historical information. They have also produced a glossy map which marks the exact locations of major water features with photographs and brief descriptions. The map is available at tourist information offices.

4.2.2. Reconstruction of a traditional way of life

Laurel Farm is a small farm. Indeed, it is an extremely small modern agricultural unit.

It consists of only 30 acres of owned land and 40 acres of rented land. Inevitably, Laurel Farm is run by entirely different principles from other 'conventional' farms which surround this tiny place.

As I described in Chapter 2, the Dymock area, in which Laurel Farm is located, is predominantly arable country with huge fields. Some of these fields are called 'prairies', that is a few hundred acres of field without any hedgerows or trees. Often these are permanent mono-cultural fields managed by agricultural contractors. Laurel Farm cannot be more different from these modern farms. The one thing that almost immediately strikes any visitor to this tiny farm is an indescribable intimacy that generates a yearning for something one would have seen before.

During the time I carried out my fieldwork, the farm consisted of orchards and pasture to feed cattle. After passing a neatly tended farmhouse and barns, one enters an old orchard of apple and pear trees. Trees are planted and cared for in a traditional way, so that there is plenty of space between trees. Nor are they modern varieties of short bushy trees, which allows each tree to grow 'like a tree' rather than like a fruit-making machine. In the shade of these trees, geese waddle here and there in groups. There is another orchard beyond the old orchard. The second orchard has recently been converted from pasture, and therefore each tree is still quite young. All these apple and pear trees are those which used to grow in Gloucestershire. Of course, this is not a coincidence. The old variety of Gloucestershire fruit trees is deliberately cultivated in this farm.

On both sides of the orchards, which are on the top of the knoll, is pasture, in which dark chocolate-coloured cattle with white tails graze peacefully. The dark brown cattle are called Gloucester cattle. Gloucester cattle used to be reared in this area, but because they did not fit into modern livestock farming - they grow more slowly than modern varieties and are not specialised enough to be either dairy cows or beef cattle, farmers stopped rearing this breed. It was once almost on the verge of the extinction and is still a rare breed. However, here in Laurel Farm Gloucester cattle is the sole variety to occupy the farmland and they happily flock here and there, showing off their almost shiny coats.

The western side of the knoll consists of land recently acquired from a

neighbouring farm where new hedgerows are under construction. The huge prairie field is now turning into smaller fields of three to five acres once again. Just beyond the boundary of the small lush fields, there is a huge prairie where arable operations are ongoing, but in which trees are dying for some reason. The contrast is so sharp and stark. On the other side of the knoll, there is a relatively large field. The field is now used as pasture, but a closer look reveals a slight undulation on the surface, made by a plough. This field used to be ploughed by a team of twelve oxen, which was the only existing team in the UK at that time. Unfortunately, bovine TB killed all the oxen several years ago, and since then the field has been used as pasture.



Plate 10: Hedged small fields with Gloucester cattle in contrast with a 'prairie' type field

Back at the entrance area where farm buildings are clustered, one may hear a churning sound coming from the barn. This old barn is actually a cheese-making factory, where six varieties of cheese are produced. Three of them are 'traditional' local varieties: single Gloucester, double Gloucester and double Berkeley, the rest are original creations of the farm: Hereford Hop, May Hill Green and Stinking Bishop. However, even the latter varieties are in keeping with local tradition. These soft

cheeses were created after meticulous study of the ancient cheese-making recipes of the Cistercian Order. In the Middle Ages most of the Dymock area belonged to the Cistercian abbey of Flexley, and the Cistercian monks were well known for their art of making good soft cheese. Although there is no documentary evidence that those monks at Flexley made cheese in this area, it was believed that they would have practised their art here, which prompted a revival of the ancient 'local tradition' in Dymock. The very last variety, which happens to be the most popular one, has a more recent local flavour. 'Stinking Bishop' is a very strong cheese. It is so strong that local shops which sell the cheese wrap it very tightly in several sheets of cling film and warn any customer who wants it that it is 'very' strong. The cheese is washed several times in perry, which is the local cider made from pears. 'Bishop' is the name of a well-known local farming family, one member of which used to live and work at the farm opposite Laurel Farm where a large pear tree stands.

It is quite clear now that the principle on which this farm is operating is to be true to 'local tradition' or 'traditional style'. Except for the cheese making process, which requires a machine to meet the hygienic standards set by the authorities, there is no modern agricultural machinery in this farm.

The tiny place was started in 1972 by Denis. He is a very relaxed man in his late fifties, with an air of a philosopher rather than a farmer. Denis was born in Sussex to a wealthy landed family and was educated at public school. After leaving school, he got a job at a wildfowl centre in Gloucestershire to satisfy his passion for birds. While working at the wildlife centre, he befriended old farmers in the area and became interested in traditional methods of farming. He gradually built up his knowledge from conversations with the old farmers and his own extensive reading. After marriage and a degree in zoology at Cardiff, he decided to put his knowledge into practice. He said that he wanted to settle down somewhere and to become part of the place. He was already familiar with Gloucestershire, so he looked for property in the county. Laurel Farm happened to be on the market at that time. The farm consisted of nearly dilapidated farm buildings and only 10 acres of land attached to them. However, it was the only property that he could afford at that time. While working as a livestock lorry driver, he restored the buildings and slowly began to

apply his knowledge. First, he acquired three of the 68 remaining old Gloucester cattle, and then in 1977 started making single Gloucester cheese from the milk from those cattle on weekends. He sold the cheese on a makeshift stall in the nearby market town of Ledbury. This turned out to be a big success. Often the weekend sales of cheese exceeded his weekly wages for lorry driving. Therefore, when he was made redundant, he naturally went into the cheese business, making traditional Gloucester cheese from old Gloucester cow's milk in a Gloucestershire village. His passion for the particular locality captured people's imaginations.

After his initial success, he gradually expanded his business concentrating on producing cheese, 90% of which is now sold into wholesale and some of which is exported abroad. He has reinvested the profits into building up the farm. He bought the adjacent land and in the late 1970s started to plant hedgerows according to a 19th-century tithe map, this being a time when the government still gave grants to farms for grubbing out hedges. The number of Gloucester cattle was also slowly increased, which not only supplied milk for some of his cheese but were also sold for rare-breed beef through local retailers. From the late 1980s, he and his friends started to collect old varieties of local apple and pear trees, which they planted in an agricultural showground in Malvern as a national collection. Since most of the old orchards had been destroyed either to convert to arable fields or to replace with modern fruit trees, the trees they collected came mostly from people's gardens. He has built up an extensive knowledge of the fruit trees through reading literature and studying old documents. He commented on a local newspaper article:

To see these (early 20th century) photographs and then to go out and find that same tree is a weird feeling, it's like history coming alive (*Malvern Gazette* 14/9/2001)

Perhaps 'making history come alive' is what he has passionately pursued for the past 30 years in Dymock. He once told me that everything was going forward outside but in Laurel Farm everything was going backward. He also said to me that his first impression of Dymock was that he felt he was allowed to live in the past there. Dymock at that time seemed to him to be so rural and he felt there was a genuine sense of continuity from the past there. I naturally asked why he was so strongly attracted by the past. He explained that in the modern world everything was

moving in the same direction and the characteristics which had differentiated one place from were another rapidly disappearing. He found it rather sad and boring. What he has done in his small farm is literally to reverse the process. By reviving old local traditions he has been creating an entirely unique place of his own.

He is now a kind of celebrity character in Dymock. Almost everyone acknowledges his unique achievement. Because of his sociable and approachable manner mixed with his extensive knowledge of the locality and a palpable passion for what he is doing there, everyone likes to be in his company. However, when he first started his project many people, especially farmers, mocked and flatly dismissed it. He observed that this tendency of indifference was stronger among old locals. In a sense their attitudes have not changed since then, but because he achieved financial success when other farmers suffered large debts, they can no longer dismiss his approach. In contrast, in-migrants are more interested in and appreciate the traditional way of life he has been re-constructing as something that makes this locality special.

He started to plant some of the trees he had collected, especially local pear trees, in his own farm to produce single variety perry, for which he received a grant from the Countryside Stewardship Scheme in 1996. He also received a grant from the same source as a contribution towards hedgerow reconstruction in 1993. These grants were not available when he started the farm. Indeed in the 1970s, not only did conservation grants not exist neither did the rapidly growing interest in 'localness', especially among local authorities and the tourism industry. However, Laurel Farm has never been a model farm to attract tourists. It has always been a working farm which provides a livelihood. He often says that if there were not any 'localness' in a livestock farm, it would be little different from a zoo. For Denis, farming is more than a commercial operation. He believes that a farm is a site where the continuity of local tradition is secured, or, alternatively it is the continuity of local tradition that should shape a farm. And he feels at home in such a place.

4.3. A Passion for the Idea of 'Local'

4.3.1. Local distinctiveness

The passion for the past expressed in the above cases is also a passion for the distinctiveness of the locality. This passion for local distinctiveness has recently been expressed in all quarters. Brochures produced by the tourist industry are full of local features which are presented as something very special created as a result of a long accumulation of the history of the locality. Farmers' markets are popular because they sell locally produced food. Local governments also stress the distinctiveness of their jurisdictions. Both Herefordshire Council and Gloucestershire County Council devote a section to local distinctiveness in their forthcoming development plans, which emphasise the importance of keeping the local distinctiveness of the counties. Each planning authority requires potential applicants to consider the local character. Worcestershire County Council produced a package of leaflets entitled *Discovering Worcestershire* whose subtitle is *Celebrating Local Distinctiveness*. Its cover features a collage of photographs of the rural landscape, old buildings, traditional customs and local foods.

It is quite easy to dismiss this rising interest in the 'local' as a cynical marketing strategy or as an offshoot of the burgeoning heritage industry. Those elements do indeed exist in the sometimes overly hyped emphasis on the 'local'. As part of the capitalist process, the tourist industry duly follows its everlasting pursuit of differentiation in order to create profit. Local distinctiveness is a spatial difference to be commercially exploited. Samuel pointed out this aspect of the 'local' as an empty sign to exploit as follows:

The regions may be robbed of their distinctive economies, but their image is intensely marketed on the strength of an aesthetic version of their past ... The more cosmopolitan capitalism becomes, the more it seems to wear a homespun look: the more nomadic its operations, the more it advertises its local affiliations (Samuel 1989b: lvii)

However, this ruthless opportunism of capitalism alone cannot explain the wider interests in the 'local', some of which have little to do with the profit making operation. Up and down the country, various projects are being carried out to 'discover', 'identify' and 'conserve' elements which make the environment special.

Various elements are highlighted in the process to embody the distinctiveness of the environment: period buildings with their styles and materials, wildlife, landscape, ancient monuments, history, customs, foods and crafts. Although the list is endless, what makes this interesting is that all these elements tend to be generically called 'heritage'. Even wildlife is often paraphrased as 'natural heritage'. The implication here is that what makes the space in question distinctive from others is believed to be its relationship with the past. In other words, elements of time define the character of the space. It seems to be believed that each environment, which is loosely enclosed by shifting boundaries, carries its flow of time from the past which materialises in various concrete elements. And if the elements do not have concrete forms, such as local history and folklore, then they are transformed into tangible objects in the form of books and documents. The projects highlighting local distinctiveness take the form of listing, recording and collecting those objects reifying the past, to which I will come back later. Furthermore, there are various types of generous grants available from both public and private sources for such a project.

It is difficult to see whether this surge of interest in the 'local', which is not entirely distinct from commercial interests but is different in motivation, was generated by campaigns launched by various local and central government agencies or whether the public demand moved those authorities to support the activities. However, the origin of the discourse currently circulating among publications produced by those authorities is quite easily traced. One of the leaflets in *Discovering Worcestershire*⁸¹ explains what local distinctiveness is:

Local distinctiveness is quite simply what makes one place different from another. It is about creating and celebrating a 'sense of place' and local identity for places we live in or visit. It is a concept which can apply to all areas of the county, both urban and rural. It is not just about rare or spectacular things, but also about those things that make each place different and are an important part of everyday lives ... Local distinctiveness is particularly about linking people with a particular place.

The Local Heritage Initiative⁸², one of the grant schemes supporting projects to

⁸¹ This campaign aims to build up an archive of the distinctive features of Worcestershire.

⁸² The LHI was devised by the Countryside Agency in 2000 and receives its main funds from the Heritage Lottery Fund. It provides grants for community-based projects to promote local heritage. The scheme has provided £10 million for over 500 projects for over the past three years. It is also creating a national archive of local heritage in England by collecting records of the projects it

promote local distinctiveness, states in its promotional leaflet:

Have you ever been curious about a clump of trees or a peculiar mound in the ground? Wondered about how people used buildings in the past or thought what future generations will see? It is these details, natural and man-made, that give places their identity and cultural variety.

The point emphasised here is to pay close attention to the details of ordinary features which carry a patina in the everyday environment. This is exactly the point made by Common Ground, a small charity but one that is immensely influential on cultural policies adopted by local authorities.

4.3.2. Common Ground

Common Ground was established in 1983 by a planning consultant turned academic, Sue Clifford, and an environmental campaigner, Angela King, to raise awareness of one's personal relationship with one's own environment. It started with two main objectives (Clifford and King 1987: [i]):

1. To promote the importance of our common cultural heritage - common plants and animals, familiar and local places, local distinctiveness and our links with the past
2. To explore the emotional value these things have for us by forging practical and philosophical links between the arts and the conservation of nature and landscapes.

Although it does not have any membership, Common Ground has launched various campaigns to realise these objectives, quite a few of which have been supported by local governments. One of the first campaigns they launched was 'The Parish Maps Projects' (Clifford and King 1987: 251-275, Clifford 1996). The project encourages people to create a map of their own parishes. Common Ground identifies 'parish' as the basic unit of everyday life in England and urges people to 'find out' more about the basic immediate environment to build up an emotional link with the place. Clifford described this basic unit as follows:

The ecclesiastical parish has been the measure of the English landscape since Anglo-Saxon times. Boundaries, some dating back more than a thousand years, are often still traceable; here, history marches with nature and each is the richer for the discourse (1996: 6).

There is a clear recognition here that the bounded space of the parish conveys continuity from past to present. Therefore, what is expected to be mapped is this

supports.

element of continuity in the fixed space. The elements of continuity are there to be discovered and collected. The project urges people to conduct 'surveys', both field and archival, to 'gather' information and knowledge about the parish they live in, and then to map them in a visual form. Making a map was the first step Common Ground proposed as a practical means to establish a personal relationship with one's own environment; therefore, people are encouraged to be subjective in order to produce a representation of their locality. The point of making the parish map is to represent something that does not normally appear on a conventional map, ie something that is not always quantifiable. They are expected to create a map of things they value in the parish. Interestingly, the project also states that a map is an expression of power and it can offer basic information for control (Clifford 1996: 5). In other words, Common Ground regards that mapping, or more generally recording, as a means to gain control of the place.

This desire for control is also their main objective. Clifford and King state that control of the environment has been monopolised by the 'experts', and people have lost control of even their immediate environment (1987: [vii]). All decisions are made far away from the place by politicians and planners, and are based on quantifiable 'scientific' data. Common Ground has campaigned to seize control back from the 'experts'. The unique point of their campaigns is that they believe people can regain control by knowing more about their immediate environment. Perhaps the logic is that a knowledge of the immediate environment strengthens and increases people's attachment to the place which in turn could mobilise people's political will to influence the decision-making process. In other words, Common Ground's emphasis on 'local' is quite strategic. An interesting point here, however, is that it is presupposed in the Common Ground campaigns that people do not have an intimate knowledge of their localities. People are considered to be cut off from the continuity which is supposed to flow within the place. Local knowledge has to be 'discovered' and 'collected' by studies and surveys. Some of this knowledge has to be salvaged before it falls into oblivion.

As well as the Parish Maps Projects, which are still ongoing, Common Ground has launched several unique campaigns. The aim of the New Milestone

Projects is to commission an artist to create a sculpture made by local materials to celebrate local character. The sculptures are placed in the middle of a field or by a road. The project intends to draw people's attention to a familiar everyday environment through new art that represents the local character. The aim of the Community Orchards Projects is to rescue rapidly disappearing old orchards. However, orchards here are considered as sites not for production but for recreation. Common Ground wants to rescue old orchards to provide space for quiet contemplation and local festivals. The orchards are also expected to serve as a reservoir for local varieties of fruit. Again, the charity aims to create a space where the continuity of the place materialises in the visible form of old fruit trees. Local residents are expected to gather together to enjoy shared activities in the place of continuity. Common Ground actually proposes such an opportunity in the form of Apple Day and Tree Dressing Day. They have also launched the Field Day Projects which celebrate agricultural fields. This project, too, regards the fields not as sites of production but as a reservoir of local history. It states that agricultural fields are 'our unique and variegated expression of a long relationship with the land' (Common Ground 1997: [2]).

In 1990 Common Ground launched 'Local Distinctiveness' as an umbrella campaign for other projects. The campaign is, in a sense, reconfirmation of their original aims. In a paper read at a conference organised by Common Ground under the same title, Clifford and King made it clear that the campaign was against the homogenisation they believe engulfs today's England (1993b). It is a quest for differences. And for that quest they selected four elements in particular to pay attention to: detail, particularity, patina and authenticity. They urged that attention should be paid to details which might encapsulate the particular character of a place. In a homogenised world, distinctiveness can only be 'found' in details. The elements are all related to history, or the continuity of the place⁸³. Authenticity is guaranteed by patina. Something can be regarded as an authentic and genuine element of a place

⁸³ Clifford and King made it clear that 'Local distinctiveness must be about history continuing through the present (1993b: 17). The founding director of Common Ground, Roger Deakin, also stated that 'By giving us access to the past, it offers some hope of access to the present and to the future' (Deakin 1993:4)

only when it is connected to its continuity. Furthermore, the authentic elements are expected to be objectified, and thus can be collected, catalogued and displayed⁸⁴. However, they stressed that this quest for distinctiveness should be conducted by local residents, not by the tourist industry, and that the distinctive elements to be singled out should have meaning for those who live and work in the environment. They state that 'locality needs to be defined from the inside' (op. cit.: 11). This statement obviously leads to the question: 'who are in the inside?' In the next section I shall examine this distinction between insiders and outsiders especially in the context of anthropology, and with this question we shall come back to Dymock and Colwall⁸⁵.

4.4. Insiders and outsiders

4.4.1. Boundaries

Coinciding with the rise in general interest in the 'local', some British anthropologists also directed their attentions to the idea of locality in the 1980s. The anthropology of locality was formed under the strong leadership of Anthony Cohen

⁸⁴ Common Ground recently launched yet another campaign *England in Particular*, which intends to collect examples of local distinctiveness in England and to compile them into an encyclopaedia. It also produced a series of radio programmes in collaboration with BBC Radio 4, which is entitled *Land Lines: the landscape puzzle*. The first programme of the six-week series was broadcast on 14 May 2003 and happened to feature Dymock.

⁸⁵ The interest in local distinctiveness increased further in the 1990s, especially after the Earth Summit in 1992, in which participating nations signed *Agenda 21: a comprehensive world-wide program for sustainable development in the 21st century*. Under the slogan of Think Globally Act Locally, each local authority in the UK was encouraged to make its own Local Agenda 21, in which the idea of 'local distinctiveness' was highlighted. A booklet produced by the Countryside Commission, English Nature and English Heritage to encourage local communities to contribute to sustainable development was full of echoes of phrases and ideas which had been expressed by Common Ground (n.d.). It urged readers to start surveying their locality and recording the result. Here again, history, including wildlife as natural heritage, is the core of the project.

In keeping with this trend of seeking local distinctiveness, both Richard Mabey and Patrick Wright expressed concerns about its negative impact. After pointing out that the sense of locality is deeply rooted in territorial feelings, Mabey worried that the quest might create 'effects of isolation, introversion and withdrawal' which could result in unpleasant xenophobia (1993: 24-5). Wright also pointed out that nostalgia for a comfortable home territory could create a hot-bed for reactionary conservatism. He also expressed concerns that blind preference to things which 'have been in the same place for a very long time' could lead to automatic hostility toward anything new (1993: 37-45).

(1982a, 1986). It was acknowledged that this anthropological interest in locality derived originally from 'a populist tendency to cultural localism' (1982b: 1). In his manifesto of anthropology of locality Cohen rejected the well established idea of the homogenous nature of the British Isles and tried to show cultural diversity or heterogeneity within the framework of the allegedly homogenous industrialised nation state (1982b: 1-2). Most of the ethnographies in the collections compiled by Cohen were on 'peripheral' areas of the British Isles, which were deliberately selected based on the assumption that 'consciousness and valuing of difference is a ubiquitous feature' of such areas (1982b: 6). This attraction of peripherality can be an instinctive orientation of anthropologists. Interestingly, however, the same assertion was made by the director of Common Ground:

Where money is scarce, local character is often at its richest ... at the 'margins' the connection between people and place are most evident and easily describable (Deakin 1993:1)

However, while Common Ground seems simply to express the usual salvationist sentiment, Cohen's preference for the 'marginal' areas was based on a different reason. He stated that 'to remain in these communities is itself an expression of commitment and commitment is sustained by a continuous elaboration of the culture' (1982b: 6). Here is expressed the peculiar usage of 'culture', which was criticised by Rosaldo. He pointed out that:

The people with culture, in the anthropological sense, have either remained on or been forced onto marginal lands. Their cultural distinctiveness derives from the inherited remnants of indigenous civilizations. Their quaint customs signal isolation, insulation, and subordination within the nation-state (1988: 80).

Rosaldo stated that those who have 'culture' are different from those of us who are in the position of 'the post-cultural top'. The notion of 'culture', or 'distinctiveness', is attached to the groups which are ranked lower in the politico-economic system. Cohen also claimed that the fringe areas in Britain were under a constant threat of being 'swallowed up' by 'the undiscerning jaws of Metropolitania', to which local people resist by strengthening their distinctive characters (op. cit. : 7). In other words, 'peripheral' areas in the industrialised nation maintain their distinctiveness because of their vulnerable positions in the centre-periphery power relationship.

Here he drew boundaries around 'peripheral communities', within which

people share a culture, or distinctiveness. These boundaries are not so much physical as symbolic. There are undeniable geographical boundaries around a local community such as an island, a village or a parish. But what he, and his collaborators, emphasised was rather invisible symbolic lines of difference which were drawn at every level of life experience: kinship, occupation, accent, manner of speech, humour, aesthetics and knowledge of the local past and environment. These symbolic lines were drawn arbitrarily to emphasise the differences, which effectively means excluding someone from the entity produced by the boundaries⁸⁶. To put it another way, whatever the nature of the boundaries, whether they are physical or symbolic, once they are drawn, then there are those who are inside the boundaries and those who are outside. Insiders and outsiders are created by the boundaries.

4.4.2. Incomers and locals

Because of the existence of two different types of boundaries, that is, physical boundaries and symbolic boundaries, there are those who are inside one boundary but remain outside the other. Since the symbolic boundaries can be created arbitrarily within a certain framework in any given situation, one's status as either an insider or an outsider is not always fixed. When Clifford and King stated that 'locality needs to be defined from the inside', they, perhaps deliberately, ignored this reality. The anthropologists working in the British Isles, on the other hand, have been quite sensitive about this distinction of insider/outsider, and especially about the status of those who are inside the physical boundaries but remain outside most of the symbolic ones. This difference between insiders and outsiders has been studied using the labels 'locals' and 'incomers'.

One of the earliest ethnographies of Britain was written by Frankenberg. His ethnography of the north Welsh village of 'Pentrediwaith' was devoted to the role of outsiders in local politics (1957). Frankenberg did not use the term 'incomers'. He instead used the term 'outsiders' and 'strangers' to describe those who moved in

⁸⁶ Knight criticised the anthropology of locality for its exaggeration of differences which would reify the local as an independent entity and ignore the importance of the role of nation in which the local is situated and formed (1994). Layton also pointed out from politico-economic point of view that, comparing with Swiss and French counterparts, English villages maintain extremely limited power and authority (1995).

from outside the village, as 'local' Pentre people called them. 'Outsiders' were wealthy merchants and professionals who were asked to play honorary roles for various local organisations and events, whereas 'strangers' consisted of priests, teachers, doctors, pharmacists and a bank manager who played, or were expected to play, active roles, or take an active leadership, in those organisations. Frankenberg's thesis was that 'local' Pentre people avoided revealing inner conflicts, which would undermine the supposedly unshakeable village unity, and kept egalitarian nature of their community by using these 'outsiders' and 'strangers' as leaders onto whom they could shift the blame of failure. In other words, in his ethnography these 'incomers' had significant importance. However, just as Gluckman stated in the introduction of the book 'I do not believe he conceals where his own feelings lie', Frankenberg described the situation from a 'local's' point of view. Ever since, anthropologists' interests, and sympathy, tend to have been placed on the side of 'locals'.

This tendency was accelerated by anthropologists' almost instinctive interest in, and sentiment towards, 'peripheral or marginal' areas and those who have lived there for generations. Ardner referred to this sentiment in his consideration of 'remoteness':

There is clearly something in the idea that distance lends enhancement, if not enchantment, to the anthropological vision (1987: 38)

Most of the contributors to Cohen's collections, which certainly increased interest in anthropological study in the British Isles, focused on a 'community' in a 'peripheral' area. Furthermore, Cohen's comment, 'to remain in the communities is itself an expression of commitment' also implied where his interests lay. Here both Common Ground and the anthropologists of the British Isles share a similar stance: one could find distinctive characters, or culture, in a peripheral area since in such an area residents are supposed to live in the same place for generations which forms the foundation of the belief that such people develop and maintain their own 'world'. Although Cohen emphasised the differences within the 'community' the sacred trinity of place-people-culture was virtually reproduced here intact.

However, similar they may be, but they are not exactly the same since Cohen stressed the element of 'resistance' in his introductory essay, which was also

expressed in the above phrase. A conscious display of local distinctiveness is 'an essential bulwark against the cultural imperialism of the political and economic centres' (op. cit: 6). This element of resistance was further pursued by Nadel-Klein who claimed that 'localism' was the dominant theme of British cultural discourse⁸⁷ (1991: 502). She first classified localism in three types: 1) the romantic glorification which represents the 'local' as 'the authentic site of real humanity; 2) the dismissive association which represents the 'local' as backward provincials; 3) the means of resistance which represents the 'local' as 'the site for resisting domination; and then dismissed the first two types as the stereotypes created by the bourgeois view located outside of the 'local' (do.: 503).

Nadel-Klein's ethnography of a Scottish fishing village whose existence was threatened by a development caused by North Sea Oil was written from the third angle, localism as the expression of resistance. However, in her ethnography the local who held the localism did not simply refer to those who lived in the village. Except for a brief mention of a leader of an opposition group against the development who was an English 'incomer', her ethnography focused on the view of the 'local' who had lived there for generations but whose numbers were reduced to half of the village population. The voices from the other half, supposedly in-migrants, were never properly heard. Limiting the subject of study can be necessary in order to produce a rich ethnography, but the limitation can also be a reflection of ethnographers' somewhat biased viewpoint. In Nadel-Klein's ethnography, in-migrants' opposition to the development was not described as resistance; instead, the in-migrants were described as 'disgruntled incomer homeowners' and their motives were also indirectly dismissed by referring to the fact that they 'had property investments to protect' (do.: 508). This rather unsympathetic or dismissive attitude towards in-migrants is not uncommon. In-migrants have been treated as 'commuters/weekenders/retired folks, whose location there was largely a matter of residence alone' (Strathern 1982b: 257).

Strathern further articulated these differences between 'locals' and

⁸⁷ Her paper was written under the intellectual influence of James Scott's *Weapons of the Weak* which placed the notion of 'resistance in everyday life' at the centre of anthropological thinking from the late 1980s throughout the 1990s.

'incomers' in her ethnography of the Essex village of Elmdon:

Villages are thus represented by name as block units with a potential for opposed interests. Now, while all Elmdon residents are aware of these sentiments, they are claimed by, and attributed by others to, a portion of the population marked off from the rest as 'real' village people. So within a village some belong more than others. There are strangers not only outside but inside as well (1982b: 255).

The locals are the 'real' people of the place, which inevitably implies that the incomers are 'false'. While the locals are genuinely connected to the place, the incomers are simply owners of houses which happen to have been built in 'their' locality. The locals are existentially committed to the place but the incomers are merely floating on its surface. This list of contrasts is almost endless, but the point is the same, that is that the legitimate connection to a place can only be claimed by birth since the most important requirement to be a local is being a member of one of the 'old' families of the place, which is denied by definition to those who move into the place later in their lives.

It is not only the locals who regard themselves as having a special and privileged relationship with the place. The in-migrants themselves often accept, or find it very difficult to deny, this relationship. It is quite 'natural' for anthropologists, for whom the concepts of 'native' and 'indigenous' have some special meaning and appeal, to focus on the locals and their points of view. It can actually be justifiable to describe the place from the 'local's' point of view since in real life, the in-migrants tend to be more vocal than the local⁸⁸. They often have a higher level of education, are more articulate and know how to mobilise political will and the way to deal with officials. Although ethnographers' well-intended efforts to balance actual power-relationships by focusing on 'the weak's point of view' in their writing should be respected, it still cannot dismiss the in-migrants' existence in the locality and their relationship with it.

Returning to the rise of interest in the locality in anthropological studies of

⁸⁸ Newby suggested considering this opposition of locals and incomers on a material basis, that is, not as an insider/outsider issue but as a class issue. He paraphrased 'locals' as deprived agricultural workers who were trapped in the locality by their 'lack of access to alternative employment, housing and the full range of amenities', while 'incomers' were affluent professional and managerial members of the middle-class, who live in the place 'by conscious choice' and can afford to 'overcome the problem' of living in the country. He focused on the competition of the local housing stock as the core

the British Isles in the 1980s, as Cohen admitted, the origin of anthropology of locality, which in this case is almost synonymous with the study of peripheral societies in Britain, was prompted by the rise of a general interest in localism. The cause of this rise of general interest itself was probably counter-urbanisation which started in the 1960s in metropolitan fringes and then expanded into the remote countryside in the 1970s (Phillips and Williams 1984: 82-9, Cloke 1985, Bolton and Chalkley 1990). The effect of counter-urbanisation had been widely recognised and frequently discussed both in lay and academic media, and the desire to move to the countryside was further accelerated by the rise of the service class, which will be discussed in the next chapter. In other words, the anthropology of locality can be described as a by-product of in-migration. Nevertheless, the actual agents who prompted the phenomenon tend to be treated as second fiddles perhaps because of the anthropologists' preference for the fixity of people in a particular location. The existence of in-migrants was either referred to as a simple ethnographic fact or presented as a symbol or a cause of change. The change in peripheral areas was often presented as a threat to the existing local communities, and therefore the in-migrants were regarded as vanguards of 'the cultural imperialism of the political and economic centres'.

They were also often represented as invaders who tried to take over the place from the local. In her study of an Orkney island society, Forsythe highlighted the difference in the decision-making process as regards the locals and the in-migrants, and reported that the in-migrants 'exploited the Orcadians' tendency to avoid public conflict' and took over the leadership of the island society to press their own interests (1980: 295-8). She then pointed out that despite their unreserved praise of the rural idyll the in-migrants' interests and sense of values were urban, and they tried to impose their urban standards on the island. They were not interested in local history, custom and tradition (op. cit: 298-300).

As opposed to this very sharp contrast between the local and the in-migrant presented by Forsythe, Phillips presented shifting boundaries between and within the two groups (1986). He pointed out that the boundaries were drawn arbitrarily within

a certain framework, depending on the context. The same view was taken by Jedrej and Nuttall (1996). In their rare anthropological study of the impact of in-migration in Scottish rural areas, they regarded these terms as rhetoric rather than a representation of reality, which were used as convenient notions to explain social conflict in a rural area (1996:10-11). They pushed the argument further and pointed out that these apparently opposing notions actually had a close relationship, in which the awareness of 'localness' was raised through the existence and the gaze of 'incomers' (op. cit. : 99-100).

However, although it is true to say that those two categories are socially constructed to some extent, there is a basis for the process. There are those who were born and brought up in the place and those who moved there later in their lives. People belonging to each group present their relationship with the place in a different manner. Jedrej and Nuttall pointed out that the 'locals' use notions such as 'roots', 'belonging' and 'old', while the 'incomers' use a notion of 'passion' displayed by a phrase such as 'fall in love with the locality' (op. cit. : 94-97). Both notions contain an element of destiny in a different way. The 'locals' express their destiny to be in the place by referring to genealogy and kinship, or temporal elements which go beyond their own lives. The 'incomers', on the other hand, resort to the idiom of emotional encounter which happened once and for all.

These opposing notions regarding the connection of each group of people to a particular locality, however, may not compete on an equal basis, just as the very words to name them are not equal. The term 'incomer' implies someone moving into other people's territory. It also carries a note of contempt (op. cit.: 94). Here, the hereditary element is considered more authentic and genuine than the conscious choice. In other words, the destiny of connection to the locality built on the temporal element is considered to be superior, a theory not only claimed by the 'locals' but also accepted by at least some of the 'incomers' as well.

Unlike Forsythe, who claimed that in-migrants were not interested in local history and tradition, Jedrej and Nuttall found that the in-migrants were indeed keen to learn them:

it is a characteristic trait of incomers that they tend to join local historical societies, while locals do

not. In Nithersdale many local people admitted they had no interest in the kind of historical material that incomers were eager to discover (op. cit: 69).

Prior to this passage, they also mentioned a passion for the past expressed by a new owner of a local manor house⁸⁹:

the owner of Waterside House is interested in the history of the estate, its families and its boundaries. Since buying the house and moving in, they have spent a lot of time and energy researching the Hoggins family history and collecting old maps of Keir. They have also restored the stables and outbuildings, dug out the well and have tried to build up a picture of what the house and grounds looked like during the 'golden age' of the estate (do.).

At the same time, however, it was stressed that this local history sought by the in-migrants was not the same history which was cherished by the locals. It is often claimed that while the in-migrants tend to 'study' or 'research' local history, the locals live with it, which means that for the in-migrants history remains pure knowledge but for the locals it consists of personal and practical experiences. Jedrej and Nuttall expressed it thus:

Despite this (in-migrants' passion for unearth local history), there is a sense in which such knowledge of the area though sometimes of considerable historical depth has nevertheless a shallow quality since it has no foundation in a practical knowledge of the area acquired over many years (op. cit.: 69)

In her study of oral history, Tonkin referred to history's two aspects, which gives a clearer understanding of the different perceptions of the past presented by Jedrej and Nuttall.

In more than one language, the same word - in English it is 'history' - has to stand both to for 'the past', history-as-lived, and 'representation of pastness', history-as-recorded (1992: 2).

Needless to say, the in-migrants' history discussed by Jedrej and Nuttall is classified as a representation of pastness, which is something different from what happened in the locality in the past. It implies something dry and remote while locals' history, or more probably memory, reminds us of something more personal and indispensable. Here again, the former sounds and is treated as something which has secondary importance.

It seems to be claimed that the essence in the differences of the perception of

⁸⁹ The same passion for acquiring 'a bit of history' of a newly purchased home expressed by an

the past as experienced by the locals and the in-migrants lies in personal experiences in the locality. Jedrej and Nuttall demonstrated this definition in the following passage:

Unlike many locals, incomers have no knowledge of the landscape and of the specific characters that inhabit it, both in the past and in the present, which can provide the basis for feeling of locality and belonging. Much local historical knowledge is not of 'significant' events in global terms, but stories, reminiscences of childhood, or of different ways of life, farming methods, significant features of village life, the estates, old cooking methods, crops and vegetables that were once grown, and of people (op. cit: 68-9).

However, personal experiences of the past in the locality itself cannot explain these differences since some of the in-migrants have lived in the location for more than 30 years, during which they raised a family and experienced the ups and downs of their lives in the locality. Although most of them do not have any direct relationship with the land in terms of their occupational lives, their experiences in the locality cannot be dismissed. It depends on the length of residence and the quality of life they have had in the locality, but the in-migrants have personal memories of the place as well. It may not be the fundamental factor in dividing the two sets of people to do so in terms of the relationships they believe they have with the locality.

The content of the 'history', or the orientation of historical interest, cannot be the essential difference either. Although the in-migrants may show a stronger interest in more colourful local episodes, that is those of national or international importance, the mundane aspects of local life and environment also attract keen interest from the in-migrants, which are perhaps represented by Common Ground's campaigns. Some of the locals, who are by no means restricted to agricultural labourers, have profound knowledge of those historical events whose influence went well beyond the locality. Just as the locals are people with various backgrounds, nor are the in-migrants' backgrounds uniform. The orientation of historical interests might be based more on their backgrounds, especially educational ones, rather than on their status of local/in-migrant.

What makes the difference is more probably the history or memories relating to one's own family who had lived and/or worked in the locality. Strathern raised membership of the old family as the defining factor of the belongingness to the

in-migrant was described by Edwards (1998: 151-2)

locality.

The village population was seen as composed of old traditional families who belonged and of people who might live there but did not belong (1982b: 257).

She also proposed the working class background as the factor since she focused on the belongingness to the territorial community of the 'village', but here what I am concerned with is not the belongingness to a group of people but the sense of belonging to a place, or a privileged connection to the locality, which does not seem to me to be defined by one's class background. What draws a definite line between the locals and the in-migrants is whether one belongs to a traditional local family or not. Being a member of a family which has lived in the locality for generations gives a person access to a story about the family. It can be one's own memory of her parents, or a story about one's great-uncle one has never seen. In either case, it is a story of the family in the particular locality that runs through time, which is a kind of inheritance. The eligibility of the participant has already been decided at birth, which is beyond one's control and circumstantial changes, therefore it is perceived as something special. The inheritance also endorses the legitimacy of a person's belongingness both to the family and to the locality through a sense of kinship, which is perceived as embedded in the locality. In other words, there is ownership linked to this story of a particular family concerning a particular locality which cannot be exchanged in principle. The ownership of the story implies that the owner is part of a temporal continuity supposed to run through the locality. One can purchase and own land and property in a certain locality but cannot buy this story of family. In-migrants may have their personal memories of the locality as intimate as those of the locals, but their memories do not go beyond their own lives, which cannot place them in the imaginary continuity.

With this difference in approach to the past of the locality, we now return to my fields.

4.5. Continuity and the Sense of Place

4.5.1. Passions for the past

After long neglect, the little episode of a group of poets staying in a corner of the Gloucestershire countryside was 'discovered' and dusted off by a handful of persons who in-migrated to the area. For the next 20 years, it involved various other local events and persons. Now the story of the poets is widely recognised not only by local residents but also by those who live well beyond the locality. People come to visit and walk round the area from all over the country in order to trace the lives of the poets, which reminds local residents of their presence. Dymock is now known as a place of the poets.

I regard this entire Dymock story as the efforts of the in-migrants to connect themselves with a particular locality. Nearly all of those who got actively involved with the events related to the poets are in-migrants. The reasons why they moved into this area are various, including jobs, property, escapism, a better environment for children, or a combination of these reasons. Many of these persons do not have any family connection to the locality. Dymock, or Ledbury, was a completely new and unfamiliar place for them. Many of the early in-migrants who moved into Dymock from the late 1960s to the early 1970s remember the difficulty they had getting along with local people. They told me that they felt that they had experienced exclusion overtly and covertly on various occasions. Overtly, some were told, 'Incomer, why not go back to home?' Subtle but frequent mentions were made of the local people's long family history in the area and their interconnectedness. People who moved in during this period tend to emphasise their 'incomer-ness':

'How long have you been here?'

'25 years'

'I see, that's quite long, isn't it?'

'Oh, no, no, no, we are still incomers here.'

I had this kind of conversation so many times. They say that those old conflicts have healed a lot now that older generations are dying out and the locals are themselves moving out. Now, many residents in Dymock are in-migrants. I heard very few bitter comments about locals from recent in-migrants. They tend to talk about the

friendliness of the Dymock people, by which they more often than not mean the older in-migrants. However, I still heard some remnants of the old attitude, such as 'To live in the country, you've got to be born there', and 'local' persons still tend to call the in-migrants 'strangers' in private.

One should be born there if one wants to claim one's legitimacy of being there. It sounds rather crude but it seems to me that it expresses one idea of the relationship between persons and place very vividly. Stressing of the importance of being born in a particular locality not only mystifies one's essentially coincidental relationship with the locality and transforms it into something pre-destined, but it also implies that one has more than one generation of relationship with the locality, which ideally includes all kin and ancestors.

I actually noticed that local indigenous persons tended to emphasise their family history when we talked about Dymock. For instance, when I started a conversation with 'So, you were born and bred here?', one woman in her late 60s from a farming background who has lived all her life in the Dymock area answered, 'Yes, I am.', and continued quickly and proudly:

My mother was born in Ketford [a neighbouring hamlet]. She was baptised, confirmed, married and buried in the Dymock church. I was born in Ketford, too, and baptised, confirmed, and married in the Dymock church. And I'm going to be buried there.

She told me where all her relatives used to live and which fields her father had worked and where her brother still farmed. She also could describe particular points of the locality which had family memories. She explained to me how she had noticed when her father came back from the fields. The sound of his horse-drawn cart could only be heard from the house when it turned a particular bend, and she showed me where it was. She recounted one after another these memories of her family embedded with the locality.

When the topic of conversation moved to the Dymock Poets, she first conceded by saying that 'It's nice to be on the map,' but then dismissed it as an in-migrants' fabrication:

Incomers went over the top, and it was all hyped up.

She regarded the Dymock Poets phenomenon as a fiction created by in-migrants

which had little concrete foundation. She said that they wanted to create a utopia, or a heaven on earth, in Dymock, which she did not like since she had seen her parents struggle to survive the day-to-day hardship in the very same locality. The story of young poets from the town spending a brief holiday walking around the countryside and developing their friendship is not the right representation of the Dymock's past for her. She remembered her mother talking about the poets, but neither of them found it particularly fascinating. She continued:

Look at all the land around, our family poured our blood, sweat and tears in it. Here is not a place where you can spend time rambling around.

She then poured out her frustration about the in-migrants:

Incomers want to change the place. They don't like the agricultural community. They don't like agricultural machines, their noise, farmers working late, but the countryside is a working place. We earn our living here. All our blood, sweat and tears are in this land. Incomers come from outside and try to tell us what to do. They just dive in and tell us what to do and cause trouble, make older people upset. They don't integrate with the locals. There're more differences than ever, so there is mild conflict between the two. Everyone has an entity of his own.

Behind her anger, there was a clear belief of 'this is our land', and the belief is supported by and based on her memories and the fact that her family has lived and worked in the locality for a long time. There is a special connection between her and the locality which goes beyond her own life.

On another occasion, when I asked another woman in her 60s if she was born and bred in Dymock, she answered yes she was and again started to map her family in Dymock; grandparents, parents, an aunt, a daughter and a granddaughter were there. She told me where they used to, and still, live.

My father went to the Dymock school, I went there, too, and my daughter and granddaughter, too.

She told me that her grandparents used to run a local pub which was recently closed and sold to an in-migrant. It has now been converted into a private house, which she thought a shame. She called in-migrants 'strangers', or 'townies', who she thought did not want to mix with the locals. When I asked about the Dymock Poets, she said briefly that 'they did a lot, but we don't go much into it'

When I asked 'How long have you been here?', a farmer's wife answered, 'Oh, we've farmed here for 150 years'. Overall, those born-and-bred local persons

tend to express their attachment to the locality through talking about their family. At the same time they tend to have a strong sense of ownership of the place. They could say 'this is our land' without any reservation. This relationship with the locality is mediated by blood, represented by family history. The blood of a family runs through time in a particular space. This form of relationship requires little reflection since it was already there when they were born. It is 'natural'. The relationship is endorsed by something that goes beyond individual experience. While this primordialised or essentialised relationship can give people a very intimate and privileged attachment to a locality on the one hand, it can exclude, or deny, other people's belongingness to a locality on the other hand since its membership is in principle closed. In-migrants are strangers, or second members of the locality, even after 20 years' residence.

However, this very personal family memory/history is not the only story of continuity which is attached to the locality. There is another story, that is local history. Interestingly enough, not just in Dymock, but in all four places where I conducted fieldwork, local history was written by in-migrants. There are published works by local persons, but they are memoirs of their childhood, which tended to be published with strong encouragement and support from in-migrants. Although there might still be a very limited number of people who could find their name in the history, it is generally beyond people's personal relationship. Even a story of a particular family could be de-personalised as an event which has taken place in the locality in the past if it were presented as a part of local history which runs from ancient times to the present day. Placed in a longer perspective, the duration of a particular family's presence in the locality might lose its magical relationship with the place. As opposed to family history/memory which is presented from a specific viewpoint, local history is presented from a rather neutral point of view. Interests shift from what happened to a family in a locality to what happened in a locality in general. In other words, local history is an open story which anyone can access in principle as opposed to a closed story of a particular family. Needless to say, the story of the Dymock Poets is part of the local history of Dymock, and it also happens to be a story of in-migrants.

The current popularity and established status of the Dymock Poets story originated with the arrival of the newly appointed vicar in 1980. He was appointed by

the diocese of Gloucester to introduce a new form of prayer to Dymock. He himself, then, was an in-migrant and the bringer of a change introduced in from 'outside'. He immediately became aware of the rift between the locals and the in-migrants in his parish. However, his job in Dymock was to modernise a rather conservative congregation which was strongly opposed to the new prayer. In a sense, his very arrival aggravated the situation. To make things worse, his straightforward manner of speech was not in keeping with the local manner. Many local elderly persons took his casual approach as an insult. In consequence, quite a few local persons, especially those who belonged to the farming community, walked out of the church in protest⁹⁰. At the same time, he tried to integrate in-migrants to the church. As soon as someone moved in, he visited their home to make it easier for them to settle in the locality. This roused a feeling among the locals that 'their' church was being taken over by 'incomers'. He had created this widened conflict part inevitably, part unwittingly; he had to do something to alleviate the situation.

What he turned to was local history. He looked for a theme for the fundraising flower show to unify the divided community. He soon came across the Dymock Poets and was intrigued by the story. It is a story of a friendship which developed in the locality, which seemed to be a suitable theme for the purpose. It is interesting here that he turned to local history to integrate the currently divided residents since he apparently regarded the local history as a shared asset of all residents of Dymock, regardless of their backgrounds and the length of their residence. Local history was perceived to have equal access for all residents.

A French historian, Pierre Nora, compared memory and history in his essay on 'les lieux de memoir' (1989: 8-9). He described 'history' as a representation of the past which was closely tied to the idea of temporal continuity that belongs to everyone, while 'memory' was the eternal reality which was only relevant to a particular person or group of people. Nora's definition of history explains very well the vicar's instinctive attention to Dymock's local history which is supposed to belong not to particular people but to a place shared by both the locals and the

⁹⁰ Even to this day, local elderly people complain about the vicar's manner of running the church, but he is also remembered as a very caring vicar who frequently visited people in need. Even the people who are bitterly opposed to his reform appreciate his care for the people.

in-migrants. Moreover, the particular item he picked from the local history, the story of the Dymock Poets, happened to be a story of in-migrants who did not belong to the any local family but spent their time in the locality. In that sense, the story had the potential to be shared by anyone who live in the locality. Or so he thought.

However, what the vicar, as an in-migrant, did not notice was the strength of the other way of perceiving the past of the locality, which does not exist as a part of local history. One way of perceiving the past cannot always be easily replaced by the other. The locals did not display a very enthusiastic response despite the fact that quite a few elderly persons had had first-hand experience of the poets, especially during Frost's revisit in 1957, or they remembered that their parents had talked about the poets. Some local persons were actually repulsed by this sudden emphasis of the story. A typical reaction was: 'Of course we know this. We don't have to be told. We just don't think this is extra-ordinary'⁹¹ This local attitude has not changed to this day.

At the flower show the vicar decided to hold a small exhibition in the church featuring the Dymock Poets. He asked a relatively long-standing in-migrant who had been an art teacher at a local secondary school to help him construct the exhibition. This is how Caroline's long relationship with the Dymock Poets started. Ever since this occasion she has been closely involved with activities related to the Dymock Poets as one of the core members. She was born in Lancashire and brought up in a village just outside Liverpool. After finishing art school, she started working as an art teacher in the Midlands. Her first marriage brought her to Gloucestershire. Neither she nor her husband had ever been to the region, nor did they have any friends or relatives there. They first settled in Gloucester but did want to live in the country; eventually a property advertisement in a local paper led them to Dymock. This is a quite typical pattern of how in-migrants come to Dymock. Most of them did not have any particular reason to settle in the locality. It could have been anywhere within commutable distance to either Gloucester or Cheltenham. Caroline settled down with her young family in a black-and-white ex-tied cottage well outside the main

⁹¹ Perhaps because of this ill-feeling, at Dymock 900, another fund-raising event held three years later,

settlement in 1968. They were one of the earliest in-migrant families in the area. Although she came to know other mothers in the area through her son, she generally found it difficult to become part of the local community. It was partly because of her stage of life she was at, which required more attention to the own family, which is still a typical reason stated by young in-migrants for not getting involved with the local community. In her particular case, her return to a teaching job in a nearby town left her with less time to care about the locality she lived in. In a sense, she was a typical young in-migrant. However, a serious car accident forced her to give up her job and stay at home. It was then that the vicar asked her to help with the exhibition.

At first she just wanted to help the vicar and was not interested in local history at all, let alone the Dymock Poets. However, his enthusiasm soon infected her and the Dymock Poets increasingly became her own personal passion. After the accident and the breakdown of her first marriage prior to that, she had been somewhat disoriented in Dymock. This 'discovery' of the local history in a sense gave her some direction. She assembled the materials collected by the vicar for the

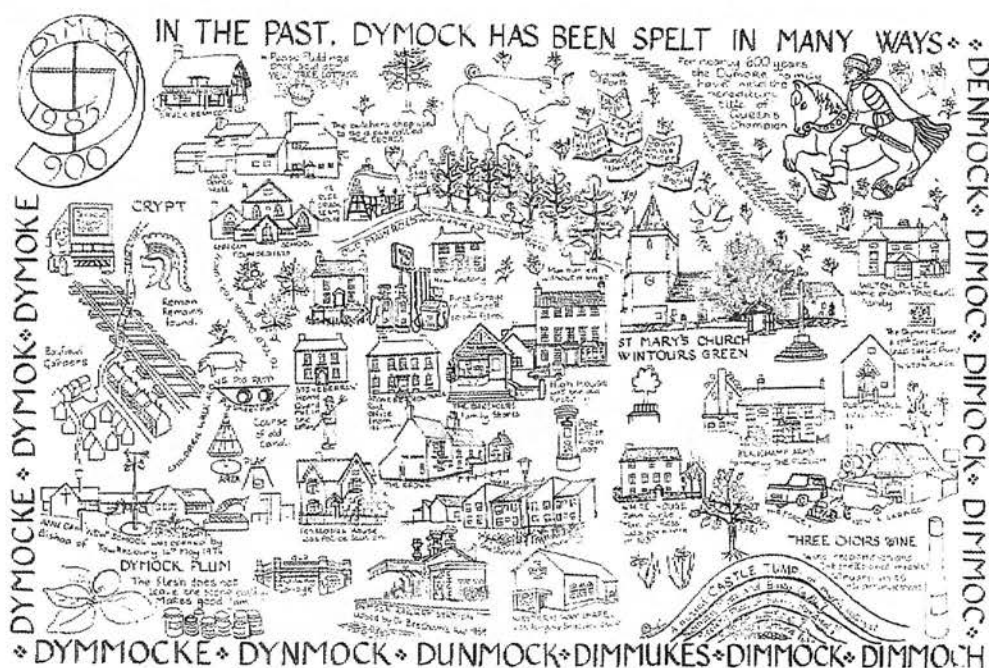


Plate 11: Caroline's map 1; Dymock 900 pictorial map

the main emphasis was moved from this particular episode to the continuity of the 'community' itself.

exhibition, which later became a permanent exhibition in a corner of the church. She also drew a pictorial map for the Dymock 900 which featured various buildings in the parish with a one-line history of each. Through these activities, she gradually learned about the local past, both from books and from conversations with the locals. Little by little, she learned about what had happened in Dymock in the past, and she became able to discern their traces in the present landscape: from archaeological remnants to histories of buildings. She learned who used to live where and what those buildings that had been converted into private houses used to be. The more local historical knowledge she accumulated, the more Dymock became personalised for her. It changed from a piece of countryside which could be anywhere in England to a place all of its own.

She became a member of the Parochial Church Council, and also joined the WPPP, the footpaths reinstatement campaign, launched by another in-migrant. Most members of both groups were in-migrants. As a member of the WPPP, she learned about land ownership and the agricultural practices and community in Dymock. Walking along the footpaths gave her more of a feel for the place. Her special

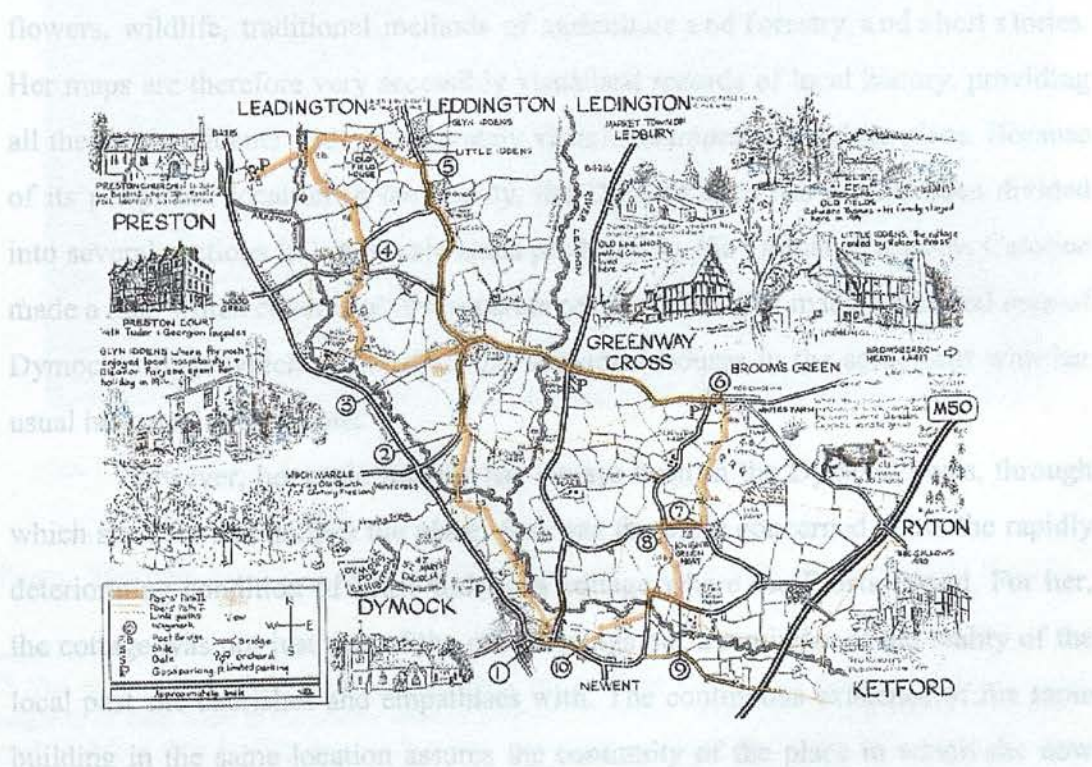


Plate 12: Caroline's map 2; Poets' Path II map

contribution to the WPPP was to draw illustrated maps for the three newly created circular walking routes. These three routes were arranged around two local historical themes: daffodils and the poets. The main purpose of the maps was to give walkers clear and detailed directions, but her illustrations also convey the historical flavour of Dymock. Illustrations of old buildings with her gentle rustic touch give a sense of the permanence of time in the locality. The maps are not neutral information sheets but they express very strongly Caroline's perception of the place. With these maps, which turned out to be very popular, the Dymock Poets were deeply embedded in the local landscape. Each cottage the poets lived in is marked on the maps' and the very name of the Poets' Paths, with the emphasis on their fondness for walking in this locality, creates the impression of a strong, physically inscribed relationship between the poets and the locality.

Through this map making she further deepened her interest in the locality. After publishing the WPPP maps her reputation as a map-maker increased in the area, and various local organisations asked her to produce maps. Her style has been consistent: a geographical map surrounded by various illustrations featuring elements of the local past, including buildings, archaeological remnants, landscape, fruits, trees, flowers, wildlife, traditional methods of agriculture and forestry, and short stories. Her maps are therefore very accessibly visualised records of local history, providing all the local residents with an accurately visualised impression of the place. Because of its peripheral location in the county, the Dymock area has always been divided into several sections in large-scale maps produced by the Ordnance Survey. Caroline made a map which covered all the separate sections. She also made a pictorial map of Dymock village which depicted all the individual houses in the settlement with her usual historical illustrations.

However, her main interest has always been in the Dymock Poets, through which she sees and defines the place. She was therefore concerned about the rapidly deteriorating condition of Little Iddens, a cottage where the Frosts stayed. For her, the cottage was not just one of the old buildings but a reminder of the reality of the local past she cherishes and empathises with. The continuous existence of the same building in the same location assures the continuity of the place in which she now

finds herself. This sentiment led her, along with other in-migrated residents, to set up a campaign to save the cottage⁹². The campaign produced the Friends of the Dymock Poets, a literary society dedicated to the Dymock Poets, as a spin-off, to which Caroline has devoted considerable time and energy and remains in the committee to this day.

In 1996 she also set up a small hut in her own garden as a visitor centre for the Dymock Poets, receiving financial support mainly from the FDP. The Garland Hut is nothing fabulous, but the inside is neatly decorated with portraits of the poets, photographs of their cottages and her own maps. Its main function is to provide a resting place for walkers and cyclists who enjoy the countryside of the Dymock



Plate 13: The interior of the Garland Hut

Poets. She tells visitors a little story of the poets while they enjoy tea and biscuits,

⁹² The people who joined the campaign were not confined to Dymock residents, but rather the majority of them lived in the nearby town of Ledbury. However, those who in-migrated to the locality tend to define their locality in a much wider sense than the locals do. I once heard a woman from North Wales call her husband 'local', when he actually came from Hereford, 20 miles away from Dymock. The details of the campaign were described in Chapter 2.

and has also made various efforts to raise Dymock residents' awareness of this little part of local history. On Remembrance Day in 1997, part of the church service was dedicated to the Dymock Poets, especially to Edward Thomas and Rupert Brooke, since it was the 80th anniversary of Thomas's death, which was made possible by Caroline's patient negotiations with the Parochial Church Council. During the service, after the vicar talked of the fact that the poets lived in and were inspired by Dymock, Caroline read Brooke's *The Soldier* and Gibson's *Lament*, and another local FDP member read Thomas's *The Sun Used to Shine* and a passage from Helen Thomas's memoirs.

Again through Caroline's persuasion, the FDP elected the vicar as its honorary member, although he had left Dymock after his retirement, according to ecclesiastical custom. In 2000, the Dymock Horticultural Society used the Dymock Poets as the theme of their annual flower show, which was arranged completely independently of the FDP. Furthermore, the pub, the Beauchamp Arms, hangs Caroline's maps on its walls. The FDP and the Dymock Parochial Church Council are currently planning to update the Dymock Poets display in the church. Caroline is now planning to create another circular footpath route with the help of an artist specialising in connecting children to their environment. This time she hopes to involve local schoolchildren in the process. The project to create the 'Children's Poets Path' will involve a series of workshops in which children will be encouraged to explore the Dymock countryside, its history and the works of the Dymock Poets, and to create poems and pictures inspired by their activities. The route will be created by the children negotiating existing footpaths, which will be signposted by way markers designed by the children. The project came from Caroline's desire to hand over this local history to the younger generation of the locality.

The other driving force behind the Dymock Poets phenomenon, Marion, joined the campaign to save Little Iddens almost by accident. Born in New York, she read environmental studies in Oxford and has worked as a freelance journalist specialising in countryside issues after dealing with the media in the Ramblers Association as a press officer. After living in the south-east for a long time, she was on her way to the Welsh border to find a new place to live. She happened to pull up

in Ledbury to have a rest, found the town agreeable and decided to settle there. She had never been to the area before and knew no one there. Two weeks later, she saw the notice posted by Caroline calling a meeting to discuss the Little Iddens situation. Being an American, she was interested in Frost which took her to the meeting. Not only did she immediately get involved with the campaign, but also became its leader.

The campaign to save the cottage and turn it into a literary centre did not achieve its purpose but the movement became the Friends of the Dymock Poets, of which Marion became the chairman and stayed in the post for the next eight years. During her chairmanship, she devoted an enormous amount of time and energy to this newly created society which became the centre of her life in her new locality. Under her leadership, the society quickly became established. She used her personal network of journalists to raise awareness of the Poets, and organised various social activities including lectures, plays and excursions for the members of the society. While running the society, she learned very quickly about the poets and the locality, soon becoming an expert on the Dymock Poets. She began to give lectures on the subject, and her lecture circuit went well beyond the immediate locality. She also conducted guided tours for various occasions, in which she walked through the Dymock countryside, telling stories about the poets and local history, and reading poems at appropriate locations. Through these activities she made friends and acquaintances in the locality. They also contributed to the construction of her own sense of place in this area in which she did not have any obvious reason to settle. Through this little episode of local history, she built up a connection to the locality, especially through the connection of another American, Robert Frost, to the locality in the past. One of her articles reveals the sentiment:

hops and soft fruit grow in abundance, Hereford cattle graze permanent pasture while sheep find shelter under old orchards, and intensively farmed cornfields sit head up against small deciduous woodlands, twisting streams thread through a landscape dotted with ponds ... Leaning on a gate, I looked over permanent pasture, studded with a dozen sheep to several irregularly shaped fields. A line of poplars stood sentinel a half-timbered 'black and white' farmhouse. Behind me a small orchard sat in the grounds of a stately redbrick house, while larger orchards striped the hillsides to the west. The big, bushy hedgerows-with-trees also give this landscape a special character. The winding lanes, the tidy orchards and the meandering streams are fringed with mixtures of hazel, hawthorn, holly, field maple, elder, dogwood and willow ... The American poet, Robert Frost, described the scene 80 years ago, when he was living nearby, 'The fields are so small and the trees so numerous along the hedges that ... you think from a little distance that the country was solid wood'. This link between Frost then and me now, a link forged by these hedgerows, gave the scene

an everlasting quality. This rich and varied landscape shows the interaction over the centuries of man and nature. So much here has been made by man, yet so much retains the character of its origins (*Countryside Campaigner* 1995 Spring)

Three years after the formation of the FDP, and after thorough research on the subject she published an anthology of the poets with a detailed commentary on their lives and poems. She also wrote a number of articles on the poets and the Dymock countryside for various journals, and gave talks on radio and television programmes featuring the Dymock Poets. Her passion for documenting the poets and Dymock was not confined to producing her own texts but also resulted in the creation of the archive centre at the then Cheltenham and Gloucester College of Higher Education which was made possible by her shrewd political acumen. The centre has actively collected works, manuscripts and photographs of the poets, and also reprints out-of-print and little-known works of the poets.

Both Caroline and Marion have a strong attachment to this locality which has developed through its past. They have devoted considerable time and energy to raising awareness of the events in Dymock's history which has made the locality meaningful to them. Both of them are strongly aware of their individual states of 'incomer-ness'; Caroline as one of the earliest in-migrants, and Marion as a 'foreigner'. Even after more than 30 years in Dymock and her commitment to the locality, Caroline strongly insists on her 'incomer-ness' when she compares herself with the locals who have become a minority in terms of population. She feels that 'they' have a 'deeper' attachment to the locality. When we talked about this, her husband, who is also a long-standing in-migrant, interrupted to tell me that 'It's between you and time. Your history begins at a certain time, but locals can trace it much further back.' She agreed, and added broadness and strength of their social network to the perceived temporal depth. Her husband mentioned that business was conducted differently among the locals: the locals do it on the basis of 'I'll do this for you and you'll that for me', while the in-migrants will receive a bill for the same job. Caroline recalled that a local supplier had refused to sell wood to her during the coal crisis in the mid-1970s since she was not an 'old customer'. She mentioned occasions like marriage and funeral as opportunities to see the extensiveness of their network. Faced with the depth and width of the locals' presence, she feels that her connection

to the locality is 'weaker' than theirs.

In Marion's case, although she was naturalised in Britain and regards herself as British now, virtually everyone identifies her as an American for understandable reasons. She is deeply committed to countryside issues, especially local conservation and farming issues, as a freelance journalist, and she has more detailed knowledge on the Dymock Poets and the Dymock countryside than most people who live there. However, whenever she meets someone or addresses someone either in private or in public on the Dymock Poets, they immediately pick up on her accent and ask why on earth an American is working in this English countryside. This annoys her very much. Her very straightforward and sometimes aggressive manner of speech and behaviour also make her stand out in the locality. People generally refer to her as 'that American woman' in a negative tone. In turn, she thinks Dymock locals are very indifferent to their own literary heritage.

Despite having this strong sense of 'incomer-ness', both of them have a strong attachment to the locality and express it through local history; Caroline mainly in the form of maps, Marion in the form of texts. They record history in their own forms. This passion for recording local history is not only confined to Dymock. At the beginning of this chapter we observed the same passion in Malvern about its water history. In Colwall, data collection and recording of local history has been conducted in a very systematic and thorough way by the Village Society, almost all of whose members are in-migrants. They try to record virtually every aspect of the past in Colwall, and are planning to publish these recordings in booklet form. The oral history of elderly residents is also being recorded and transcribed. Old trees and hedgerows were mapped. All the buildings have been photographed, and all the records are stored in a newly built archive centre annexed to the village library and open to the public. In the last section of this chapter, I shall consider this passion for local history among the in-migrants.

4.5.2. Objectified Continuity: documentation and public access to the past

Throughout this chapter I have described person's passion for the past in their chosen place of residence. However, this obsession with the past among the in-migrated

population is neither new nor geographically specific. In his ethnography of the American rural-suburban town(s) of Chadds Ford, Dorst encountered the same obsession with the past among the local residents (1989). He, however, analysed this obsession from quite a different angle and drew quite different conclusions to mine. Both our ethnographies described various activities focused on the local past. It seems useful here to refer to his understanding of this obsession since both of us note the same phenomenon, but in quite a different way, which is 'documentation' or 'texturisation'

The majority of the current residents of the south-eastern Pennsylvanian town immortalised in the works of Andrew Wyeth are in-migrants, and there are few who could trace their personal origins in the local past. Dorst found an obsession with the past in various aspects of local cultural production including tourist brochures and magazines, styles of buildings and landscape, postcards, museum displays, souvenirs and a craft fair. He interpreted all these local cultural products as 'indigenous self-documentation', or 'reproduction of image of the self', and called it 'auto-ethnography' which is reflected in the title of his ethnography *The Written Suburb*. As he made very clear at the beginning, he studied Chadds Ford not as a geographical region or a community but as 'a post-modern phenomenon' (op. cit.: 3). His study theoretically depended on Frederic Jameson's interpretation of postmodernity (1991: 1-54, originally 1984), that is, postmodernity as a social and cultural formation, or more specifically postmodernism as a cultural practice under the condition of advanced capitalism. Just as Jameson interpreted art, including literature and architecture, in the light of postmodernity, Dorst applied Jameson's approach to a 'site' which was Chadds Ford.

The gist of Jameson's interpretation of postmodernity is its 'depthlessness', or its desire for 'pure surface'. According to Jameson, one of the idiosyncratic characters of postmodernity, the culture of advanced consumer capitalism, is its addiction to reproducing images which do not reflect any reality. He showed this by comparing two paintings representing shoes: one by Gogh as an example of a modernist representation, and another by Warhol as postmodernists one. While Gogh's worn-out peasant shoes remind those who see them of the would-be story

behind the image, Warhol's heap of pumps were presented as pure objects that refuse to give any story behind them. He claimed that the postmodernist representation did not have any interior, essence, authenticity or depth. It exists as a signifier without a signified, and is therefore 'depthless', flattening everything. Another characteristic of postmodernity is the disappearance of the individual subject or the unique personal style. Again, the lack of the idea of the original is the point. Therefore, the mode of cultural production in postmodernity takes the form of pastiche, or the imitation of existing styles, which inevitably uses the past as a resource. However, the past in pastiche, or in postmodernity, ceases to be a lived experience or something meaningful to people's sense of existence. The past is exploited as elements to elaborate the present. In other words, the past is disconnected from historical relations and transformed into available material for the decoration of the present life. Here again, the depthlessness of postmodernity is at work, which flattens the sense of time, too. Furthermore, since the cultural production in postmodernity is inseparably linked with its environment, that is, advanced consumer capitalism, these flattened elements are simultaneously objects of commercial exploitation. In postmodernity, aesthetic production is integrated into commodity production.

Dorst's study of Chadds Ford is an almost verbatim application of Jameson's theory of postmodernist art to social scientific research. He even adopted Jameson's strong interest in architecture and displayed detailed interpretations of architectural characteristics of local museums. I am not sure whether Dorst is an anthropologist using the literary theory of postmodernism or a literary critic appropriating an anthropological method of fieldwork, but his ethnography of Chadds Ford seems more like a review of an art exhibition. He interpreted Chadds Ford as 'an assemblage of texts, just as a literary critic reading a text or a geographer of urban studies describing a city. In other words, he analysed the products of cultural production as severed from those who produced them. To be fair, he made clear this approach of the absence of people from the beginning, and the result of this approach is the perfectly coherent and almost pure representation of the site of postmodernity or the site of advanced consumer capitalism. However, his ethnography scarcely shed any light on the local residents who are actually 'producing' the site. Those who live

and work in the locality and their intentions and emotions seem to be almost irrelevant for Dorst to understand 'Chadds Ford' since those mostly middle-class white in-migrants from urban areas were assumed to be mere agents of postmodernity.

In *The Written Suburb* Dorst listed up one obsession of the local past to another. However, he mostly concentrated on objects produced by these obsessions: a suburban development created by speculative builders, displays and buildings of museums, souvenirs and brochures for tourists, commercialised 'community' festival, and Wyeth paintings. In every single activity, the idea of tradition and nostalgic images of bygone days are explicitly expressed as key elements. Needless to say, most of these objects are inseparably connected to commercial operations. And Chadds Ford depends on tourism. Every institution is eager to therefore endlessly reproduce the image of an agrarian idyll and a close-knit rustic community which has been painted and made so famous by Wyeth in order to make a profit from it. Dorst called this process of the reproduction of a particular image of the place 'self-documentation' which is considered as a peculiarity of postmodernity. What is documented is the selected image of the place, which in Chadds Ford's case was the past and tradition, in a broad or vague sense of the word. However, it is not very clear who actually 'documents' the image. Dorst described it as if either the place or the force of post-modernity had its own will and documented its image, the document being nothing but an inscription on the surface, which does not have any reality beneath it: 'an elaborate stage set in which one can imagine and enact the idea of a way of life' (op. cit. : 46).

Dorst's interpretation of the passion for the past and the practice of documentation in Chadds Ford are very sophisticated but rather cynical. This cynicism may come from his intellectual interest in postmodernity, or from the idiosyncratic character of Chadds Ford, that is, its heavy dependency on tourism. In either case, I referred to his study here as an extremely refined case of the popular interpretation of the middle-class in-migrants' presence and activities in a rural area, that is, superficiality. This alleged superficiality, whether it is a feature of

postmodernity or not, inevitably implies their lack of commitment to the place, which subsequently undermines and dismisses their relationship to the locality. Unless you were born in the locality or were engaged in manual labour related to the land, you would not be regarded as having a 'real/deep/true' relationship with the locality, which technically denies any prospect for most of the in-migrants to claim or build such a relationship. They are therefore often described as 'strangers', 'settlers', or agents of postmodernity, in effect blind followers of consumer capitalism.

The self-documentation which Dorst found in Chadds Ford was in reality mostly part of a marketing strategy directly or indirectly linked to and operated by local tourist industries. In other words, 'documentation' is an image-making effort based on commercial interests rather than the activities of those who live there. I also encountered various documentation processes during my fieldwork, and I interpreted them in a completely different way.

I use this term 'documentation' in a broad sense which includes not only actual text-making activities but also map drawing practices, performances such as enactments of the past, and the restoration or preservation of historic buildings and the environment. In other words, I use this word to refer to a conscious effort to record what happened, or is supposed to have happened in some cases, in a given locality in the past. The documentation may take various forms, but mostly it results in producing a concrete or tangible record which other people can access and refer to.

We have already seen the examples of the documentation process in Dymock, Colwall and Malvern. And, as I demonstrated, few of the documentation processes taking place in these places were, and are, linked to commercial interests⁹³. Neither Dymock or Colwall are really classified as tourist sites. Malvern is a tourist destination but the water heritage project is aimed more at raising the awareness of local heritage among the local population rather than at providing an attraction for visiting tourists. To put it another way, the documentation-related activities which I observed were not carried out as part of consumer capitalism, or at least not as an

⁹³ There was some involvement of commercial interests in the 'documentation' process in the cases I described, which, however, were hardly regarded as driving forces of the processes like those in Chadds Ford: the local tourist industry is involved with Malvern's water heritage project but they are more like sponsors rather than active agents, and although Laurel Farm is a commercial operation Denis has never used his passion for the past as a marketing stunt.

explicit expression of such a force⁹⁴. They were driven by the strong passion of individual residents of the locality rather than anonymous forces. There was little economic incentive for those who were actively involved with the process.

I have also demonstrated who those individuals were. They were overwhelmingly in-migrants of various lengths of residence in the localities rather than those who were born and brought up there. Although the reasons they got involved with the documentation process of the past were various - some quite by accident and others with a strong determination - all of them took their involvement with the local past through the documentation process quite seriously. Many took it as their life's work. What then drives them to get so seriously involved with this process? What is the source of their passion for the local past? Why the past?

It seems to me that these questions lead us to the essence of the notion of 'place'. Under the strong cultural hegemony of scientific discourse, or more specifically one formed by physics and philosophy, Western epistemological thinking, whether it is in an academic or a lay context, tends to present and understand the world as two separate phenomena, namely, time and space, with these two phenomena usually treated as entirely independent entities. However, in the vernacular or everyday notion of the personally meaningful environment, these two elements are inseparably intertwined and make up the world for a person. Phenomenologist Edward Casey put it as follows:

One very important dichotomy subject to the deconstructive power of place is that of space and time, which we have seen to be twin preoccupations of modern thinking in the West. But the phenomenological fact of the matter is that space and time come together in place. Indeed, they arise from the experience of place itself. Rather than being separate but equal cosmic parameters ... space and time are themselves coordinated and co-specified in the common matrix provided by place. We realize the essential posteriority of space and time whenever we catch ourselves apprehending spatial relations or temporal occurrences in a particular place (1996: 36-7).

His argument was made against the now well established and accepted theory of 'place' as a social construction (op. cit: 14-15). The theory assumes the preceding existence of a pure and transparent entity of physical space before the emergence of

⁹⁴ It is extremely difficult to deny the influence of consumer capitalism on the process since rural living, as an ideal British lifestyle, has long been exploited heavily as an established package to sell various products in Britain. Few members of the population could have been free from such an influence.

the cultural perception of environment. According to this understanding, the element of time was not even relevant to the element of space before being 'placened'. The theory goes that we, human beings, transform this transparent entity into distinctive entities of 'existential spaces' by giving meanings to it, or we acculturate and historicise it, and that is when the element of time appears. Casey argued against this theory of priority of space before place from a phenomenological point of view. He claimed that the notions of pure space and time had been separated in the conscious intellectual exercise of modern European science and philosophy for the convenience of understanding natural phenomena. Prior to those intellectually formed notions, there had been our vernacular or embodied understanding of the environment, in which the elements of space and time were inseparably interlocked. Geographer Edward Relph, who applied the phenomenological approach to his study of environment, also referred to this vernacular perception of the environment:

The result of such a growing attachment, imbued as it is with a sense of continuity, is the feeling that this place has endured and will persist as a distinctive entity even though the world around may change ... Time is usually a part of our experiences of places, for these experiences must be bound up with flux of continuity. And places themselves are the present expressions of past experiences and events and of hopes for the future (1976: 31-3).

According to the phenomenological understanding of the environment, we are always already in place. To be more precise, in phenomenological understanding 'place' only exists within ourselves, or within perceiving subjects (Casey op. cit.: 17-9). In other words, it is a life experience of human consciousness rather than some physical entity existing independently of our minds. I wrote that we were 'always already' in a place, but this statement needs a little correction. We are always already in a place when we actively seek meaning in the environment since it depends on our state of mind whether we are in a place or not. Therefore the same environment perceived as a place by one can be a complete void for another. Furthermore, as the verb 'seek' implies a place is also a process rather than a pre-established entity.

The phenomenology explains that we are in a spatio-tempo complex when we perceive the environment we are in as something meaningful. Expressed in the other way round, unless we had both spatial and temporal elements which were distinctive to the location we would not be able to satisfy our desire to be in a place.

This gives us a clue towards understanding the passion for the past we have observed. The temporal element of the environment is perceived in a certain way. There is a tacitly accepted postulate in the vernacular everyday understanding of the environment that there is the existence of a flow of time, or continuity, in a given environment. This continuity is perceived through remnants of the past, and does not always take the form of a physical object.

The rising interests in the local distinctiveness and the campaigns to raise awareness of it that we saw earlier in this chapter are good examples of this vernacular perception. In the campaigns, the distinctive features of a locality are presented as 'heritage'. In other words, it is the evidence of continuity that defines the character of the location. This heritage may take various forms: most commonly as physical objects but also as non-physical forms of performances, which include customs and skills, and stories that may be presented as legend, myth, history or memory. The various forms of this heritage reify the continuity running through the place. The recent passion for local distinctiveness, which is highly likely to correlate with the ever-increasing amount of in-migration, seems to me to reflect this desire of the in-migrated population to link itself to the temporal elements of the locality.

There are several ways to connect oneself with the supposed continuity of the locality, depending on the forms of its reification. If the continuity is reified in the form of objects such as buildings, one could own them if one could afford and were allowed to do so. Alternatively, in the case of not being able to afford them or not being allowed to own them, one could relate to them by participating in a management process of preservation and conservation, including the restoration, or in some cases the promotion, of the objects. The very notion and term 'heritage' implies that the object is a shared property to which one is allowed to exercise one's will through its management. One could also link oneself with the continuity by performing or enacting customs and skills. Many examples I have already shown. Writing stories about the locality, which typically take the form of local history, is also a way to connect oneself to the locality. This is the documentation of the continuity.

In reality, these three forms of connection to the continuity, namely,

possession, performance and documentation, are intertwined with each other. Purchasers of period objects, especially in the case of buildings, tend to begin restoring them to their 'original' state. They also often state to excavate the history of the object. Whether they actually produce a properly written report or simply make some notes, this research involves some kind of documentation. The result of such research tends to be published in a parish magazine or stored in the local history section of a nearby library. The same process is also often observed in performances. Objects, customs and skills rarely exist on their own; they are usually accompanied by some historical stories. The documentation of objects and performances does not only record their physical features and procedures but also textures those formal and informal stories attached to them. In other words, the act of documentation prevails among all the forms of people's conscious efforts to relate to the continuity of the locality. It might be described as an almost institutional or obsessive activity among the in-migrated population who wish to build a personal connection with the locality they have chosen to move into.

It might be worth noting that through this process of documentation what persons want to build is a relationship not so much with a group of people or a community as with the location or environment itself. The history of the community or the unique personalities of the locality in the past are certainly referred to in the process of documentation but they are treated as elements of the locality just like other features of the locality, such as buildings, farms, trees and hedges. The documentation is quite a personal, rather than collective, activity of a chronicler even when it is conducted as a part of a collective activity.

In some cases, part of this strong feeling expressed through documentation is generated and stimulated by the existence of the locals who do not have to consciously confirm their relationship with the locality since the relationship is accepted as a natural fact by both the locals themselves and the in-migrants. This is especially so when there are conflicts between the locals and the in-migrants, which was the case in Dymock, and the in-migrants have to consider the differences between them and the locals. Although there are various factors involved, the difference boils down to the fact that the locals have stayed in the locality for more

than one generation. By being there for more than one generation, the locals are given a kind of right to claim a privileged relationship with the location. They personify or reify the supposed flow of time, or the continuity, of the locality by their own existence. In a sense, they 'own' the locality not necessarily in the form of property ownership but in the form of ownership of the continuity. The continuity is translated to their genealogy which is expressed through their memories and family histories. In the genealogy the imagined continuity is perceived as a flow of substance metaphorised by blood (Strathern 1992: 80). Strathern likened the values and conventions of a society to its property which is considered to be transmitted from one generation to another (ibid: 157). By the same token, the memories and the family history of the locals can be regarded as property whose ownership assures the continuity and also endorses their 'ownership' of the locality. Memories and family histories are stories both attached to and also representing the continuity substantialised as genealogy or blood. Faced with these stories, whose heirs are in principle decided by birth, those who are excluded from this channel to access the continuity and who still want to have a connection to it have to seek another channel which enables them to feel that they are also connected to the continuity. The act of documentation can be regarded as such a channel.

In another case the act of documentation could start without such a strong confrontation or even quite independently of the existence of the locals, which was the case in Colwall. The current documentation in Colwall conducted under the aegis of the Village Society started quite recently, by which time the majority of the population is made up of in-migrants. Furthermore, because of the unique historical development of the settlement and its location, Colwall has constantly accepted in-coming migration. Although their numbers increased dramatically in the 1970s there had always been a sizeable proportion of in-migrants in Colwall and there has been little confrontation between the locals and the in-migrants. In Colwall the documentation process has more to do with the character or social background of the in-migrants rather than with a confrontation with the different or privileged mode of connection to the continuity.

Because of its unique characteristic (the geographical proximity to Malvern

where public schools and the then MOD research institution are located, the direct railway service both to Birmingham and London, and the famous Malvern Hills with the renowned landscape), Colwall has attracted a particular kind of people. Although property prices are always higher than those in surrounding areas, Colwall being outside the commutable area to London, they are not outrageously so. This combination of property prices, the particular job opportunities, and the transport, educational, retail and entertainment conveniences make Colwall a popular place for people belonging to the middle-class, especially those who belong to the service class. I shall describe the service class in detail in the next chapter. Suffice it to say here that the service class consists of those who have professional or managerial jobs either in the public or the private sector. For those who belong to this class, especially in the public sector, it is almost second nature for them to produce documents, to classify them and then to store them. In other words, recording and document making is nothing extraordinary but very basic everyday activity for them which has become second nature rather a through their career.

I am not suggesting here that those who got involved with the history projects in Colwall simply followed blindly or automatically the habitualised norm. However, it is very natural and appropriate for them to begin the documentation process when they want to express their passion for the past or feel a desire to be linked to the continuity of the locality. They are good at gathering information and packaging it in the form of a document, building up an archive in a systematic way. The documentation in Colwall took all sorts of forms, such as maps, paintings, photographs, slides, CD-ROMs and audio tapes. There is a clear passion for recording all aspects of the local past in a comprehensive way and storing them in the archive. In the process there was no sign of rivalry with the locals. In fact the locals were treated as precious sources of information. The in-migrated 'historians' were willing to record locals' personal memories and family histories, and the locals in turn were pleased to offer such information. In other words, in Colwall locals' personal memories were also historicised through the documentation process⁹⁵.

⁹⁵ This inclusive approach of Colwall in-migrants can be interpreted as the appropriation of 'others' memories to their own. William Kelly pointed out in his study of a rural district in Japan that the rural nostalgia boom in Japan decontextualised and transformed a particular local custom into a generalised

Whatever forms it takes, the process of documenting the local past is vigorously pursued by in-migrants. The obvious result of this activity is the production of records which in most cases take physical forms: paper, photographs, tapes, videos and CDs. In other words, through the documentation process the past in the locality is objectified. In anthropology this process of objectification was first discussed by Barnard Cohn in the context of colonial India, in which Westernised intellectuals, who had been separated from the indigenous culture through Western education systems, had to return to their once severed past:

The Indian intellectuals of Bengal in the nineteenth century and then the whole Western educated class of Indians in the twentieth century have objectified their culture. They in some sense have made it into a 'thing'; they can stand back and look at themselves, their ideas, their symbols and culture and see it as an entity. What had previously been embedded in the whole matrix of custom, ritual, religious symbol, a textually transmitted tradition, has now become something different. What had been unconscious now to some extent becomes conscious (1990: 228-9, an earlier version was cited in Handler 1984: 61)

Cohn's idea of objectification was then subsequently adopted and developed by Handler in his study of Quebec cultural nationalism (1984, 1985). While Cohn compared cultural elements to objects in a figurative way, Handler meant it literally. He claimed that in a world view of modern cultural nationalists 'culture has come to be represented as and by "things"' (1985: 215). He found an objectifying logic of

Japanese national folk tradition (1986: 613). He also suggested that academic folklore studies, or nativist ethnology, in Japan, which is characterised by its passion for recording rapidly vanishing folk customs and folklore, has itself long been the driving force behind forming a national folk culture by appropriating various regional cultures which happened to be in the current national territory of Japan (ibid. : 616n16). Marilyn Ivy referred to the same process of the formation of a national culture in Japan (1995: 12-3, 17, 31-2). In a different context of colonialism, Renato Rosaldo described the peculiar attitudes of the agents of colonialism, such as officials and missionaries, towards the local cultures they colonised (1993: 68-87). They often displayed nostalgia for the culture which they had deliberately altered or destroyed. They were also keen to record vanishing or vanished cultures. Rosaldo called their paradoxical mode of thinking 'imperialist nostalgia'. The case of Colwall, on the surface, appears to be similar to these two cases of appropriation. All of them showed strong passion for collecting and recording the past or something implying continuity from the past. However, there is a fundamental difference between them. The appropriation carried out by the national force and the preservation or salvation conducted by the colonial forces were 'outside' interventions to the locality. These forces were not interested in the given locality per se. What they were interested in were quaint pieces of custom which happen to fit their image of national past, or which could stimulate their curiosity. The fact that a certain piece of custom was practiced in a particular locality did not have much importance for them. The agents of those forces had little emotional attachment to or physical investment in the locality. They simply collected 'interesting' items belonging to the locality which could be juxtaposed with other items collected in completely different localities. Colwall 'historians', in contrast, actually settled down in the locality and spend their lives there as residents. They have a strong attachment to Colwall and are genuinely interested in their adopted home and its past.

taking culture as collectable materials in Quebec's cultural legislation, which was directed by regional cultural authorities. The aim of that legislation was:

Crucial to this goal [to raise awareness of the nation's historical and cultural possession among its members] was the work of 'inventorying' cultural property in dossiers with extensive photographic documentation in order, first, to preserve 'at least the memory' of patrimonial objects and, second, to aid in the 'practical task' of 'conservation and preservation' (1985: 198).

He identified three stages of objectification of culture taken by the cultural nationalism which followed the objectifying logic:

First the collectivity or its representatives must take stock of what it has - hence the widespread passion for the inventory in cultural-property management as well as in nationalist literature more generally. Next, what has been shown to be 'ours' must be acquired - either by the state, or by private citizens - and enclosed, whether by isolating property with special rules, constructing museums, or gathering relevant information and images within the covers of books (ibid: 214).

These three stages of inventory, acquisition and enclosure are what we observed in the documentation process in Dymock, Colwall and Malvern, even if they were not carried out in the same thorough manner as they would have been by the state or committee created for that specific purpose. The difference is that while Handler was mainly concerned with historical buildings and monuments which had already been objects, what we are mainly concerned with here, history and memory, have not been. The objectification of the past involves the actual transformation of non-objects into objects, whereas the objectification of culture is the projection of the notion of culture onto physical objects, or the regarding of certain physical objects as culture. Either way, once objectified both culture and the past become an object of the desire of possession⁹⁶. In other words, culture and the past can be collected and then possessed. One can be an owner of culture and the past. Referring to the habit children have of collecting their favourite objects, James Clifford stated:

In these small rituals we observe the channelling of obsession, an exercise in how to make the world one's own, to gather things around oneself tastefully, appropriately (1985: 238).

By collecting and possessing objects one actually builds up one's own ideal world. Both Handler (1985: 210) and Clifford (ibid: 237) referred to C. B. Macpherson's 'possessive individualism' (1962) which argued that the individualism which

⁹⁶ This logic can be reversed. The desire to possess objectifies culture and the past, to make them possess-able.

emerged in 17th century England was characterised by its possessive nature: an individual is defined by what he had. From this concept Handler argued that a nation as a collective individual was also defined by what it has. This logic explains pervading passion of cultural nationalists for objectifying 'culture' by inventorying, acquiring and enclosing various elements. Following Handler's argument, Clifford states:

Some sort of 'gathering' around the self and the group- the assemblage of material 'world', the marking off of a subjective domain which is not 'others' - probably is universal. And all such collecting produces hierarchies of values, exclusions, rule-governed territories of the self (ibid: 238).

In the context of cultural nationalism, objectified culture or the past assures the very existence and identity of a group, which simultaneously creates others who are excluded from the boundaries. The ownership of objectified culture and the past, or cultural property, is clearly established and jealously guarded, which sometimes becomes issue of dispute between several groups.

The objectification we observed in Dymock, Colwall and Malvern takes a similar form in their processes but was fundamentally different in their character and in their ends. While the nationalists' objectification is naturally collective, our local objectification was essentially personal. In the nationalists' projects, objectified culture or the past is supposed to be the property of the members of a nation whose membership is practically closed. And although a nation is in many cases territorialised, it is essentially a group of people, which means that objectified culture or the past is the property of those who belong to the group. This is, in essence, the objectification of a family and its history. The objectified past observed in my field is understood in a different way. The past, or the continuity, that we discussed was supposed by those who participated in the documentation projects to be the past or the continuity of a locality rather than of a group of people.

Here we observe a transformation of the way of perceiving the sense of continuity set in a locality. The continuity represented as culture and history is essentially a trace of the lives of generations of a group of people. In other words, the continuity is attached to a group of people who have lived in a certain locality for generations but not to the locality itself. However, the fact that the group of people,

or community, is located in a particular geographical site makes this original nature of the sense of continuity ambiguous. To put it another way, because of this almost inseparable relationship between a community and its location, the sense of continuity attached to a particular group of people can also be perceived as a continuity attached to the locality itself. This ambiguity or the confusion to which the continuity is attached does not mean much, inasmuch as the character of the community stays as it has been, that is, largely consisting of those who can trace their lineage for generations there. In this case, those who can claim ownership of the continuity is closed just like the case of a nation. Those who cannot trace their lineage inevitably feel alienated from the ownership of the continuity as far as they perceive that continuity attached to people. However, once the perception of the continuity is shifted from the people to the locality, then they have a chance to claim ownership of it.

In either way, the continuity is perceived as objects. In the case of those who can trace their lineage, they themselves are the objectified continuity. More precisely, their blood which is perceived to be inherited from their ancestors is the symbolic substance for objectifying the continuity attached to the community/locality complex. The imagined shared substance allows them to connect to all their kin who have ever lived in the locality. In other words, they connect to the locality through their families, who at the same time constitute a community. In the case of those who cannot trace their lineage there, the continuity is perceived as a general local history which includes the family histories of the former group as its component parts. Expressed differently, here the continuity is set directly in the locality itself without the mediation of people or a community. Unlike members of the former group, who themselves objectify continuity, people who belong to the latter group have to make conscious efforts to connect themselves to this continuity of the locality. This connection is made through the same logic of objectification as the former group, and the connection is claimed through ownership of the objects. Continuity as local history is objectified either as existing historical material, such as buildings, monuments and artefacts, or through the documentation process.

The desire to be connected to the continuity thus prompts people to conduct

an objectification of that continuity⁹⁷. By transforming it into a tangible reality which they can own, they ensure their connection to it. In the case of documentation in particular, not just the ownership of the result but also the very process of objectification itself contributes to produce the sense of connection. The process of accumulating local knowledge and then writing it down gives people the opportunity to be actively involved with the continuity⁹⁸. Establishing a connection to continuity through documentation, or more broadly, objectification does not require particular qualifications. One does not have to be a member of a particular family, class, occupational group or ethnic group to connect oneself to continuity. Since this connection is personal rather than collective, what is required is one's own willingness to be connected to the locality. In other words, the channel of connection is not exclusive.

Although the connection to continuity through documentation is personal, the process makes the resulting documents available to the public. Often the documents are published in various local newspapers or shown in exhibitions. In some cases they are published in the form of a book or booklet. In the cases of Dymock and Colwall, the archive centres were specially set up to store these documents and records. In these collections, varied local knowledge was revealed, including personal or family memories of those who had lived in the localities for generations. In a sense, the documentation process is also a process of building public access to the local continuity. Just like the group in Dymock mainly consisting of

⁹⁷ Needless to say the process and objects of objectification are highly selective: objectification does not consist of a faithful reconstruction of the local past. For example, the presence of the in-migrated population was scarcely mentioned. The connection they want to build up is between them and the supposed local continuity not found among the in-migrated population. Handler also pointed out that this process is unself-conscious:

The paradox of nationalist objectification ... lies not in its self-conscious quality but in its un-self-consciousness: people believe that they are discovering what their culture has been and is. They assume that culture is a real-world entity and that by analyzing its objective properties they can preserve (1984: 62).

⁹⁸ Referring to graffiti on historical monuments, David Lowenthal states the following:

We feel more at home with our past, whether manufactured or inherited, when we have put our own stamp on it. Some occupants of old houses seek to exercise the imprint of previous occupants, to replace their predecessors' past with their own. We alter the past to become part of it as well as make it our own (1985:331).

in-migrants, tried to set up public access to the countryside by opening up and re-instating the public right of way, the people I have described in this chapter who are also in-migrants, perhaps unwittingly, played the same role from the temporal viewpoint of the locality.

What I have tried to describe and explain in this chapter are the efforts made by some in-migrants, who have a deep attachment to their adopted 'home', to establish a connection to the continuity which supposedly flows through the locality, an essential element, it would seem, for them to form their own sense of place, or a sense of belongingness to the place. I discovered the practice of documentation and found the logic of objectification behind it. I interpret their practice as a kind of way in which they can 'own' the continuity or, more precisely, a piece of that continuity. Ownership may be too strong a term to describe the sense engendered by the documentation process, including the fact of owning the actual result of the process. Sharing the knowledge or the continuity can be more appropriate. However, the connection formed through objectification is logically inseparable from the sense of ownership of the objects which are produced consequently.

However, I am not suggesting here that this sense of ownership of the local continuity created by objectification is an easy way to obtain an instant identity as a ready made consumer choice. If a tourist who bought a local history booklet or a holiday-home owner who purchased a period house claimed that they owned part of the continuity of the locality, it would be a ludicrous claim. What I have investigated in this chapter are the practices of those who settled in the locality and had a strong attachment there. All of them expressed their passion for the local past, and they made an effort to establish a firm relationship with the continuity of the locality by making it something tangible, an action I interpret as something that gives a sense of assurance to the relationship. This assurance was established not just by owning the objectified continuity, but also through the act of objectification itself. In other words, the sense of place created by this process requires active commitment.

Chapter 5: Forming a Place

5.1. Introduction

In this chapter I shall examine a framework through which persons in contemporary rural England physically form their own place and I shall also focus on a model they rely on for that process. The framework is the British space management system, which includes both planning and highway regulations and the model is a 'village'.

'Planning' is perhaps the single most important issue in contemporary rural England. Many residents pay very close attention to planning issues in their area; whether it be a large development project or a minor alteration to their neighbour's house. It is one of the most common topics in everyday conversation. The space management system does not only deal with the built environment but also covers certain trees and hedges, footpaths, and, in some cases, the use of fields. In other words, it controls and regulates almost all physical aspects of the countryside.

Like it or not, persons in the countryside have to form their own space within the framework imposed by the system. However, as we have seen in the Colwall case, they do not merely passively accept the system, but instead actively or even aggressively use the system to create their own ideal space. I interpret their activities as the expression of their desire to control their own environment. The space management system allows them to implement that desire beyond their own property, which does not, however, mean that this desire can always be realised. The system itself is not neutral, but is actually heavily value-laden, having been constructed culturally, as well as politically, for the past hundred years.

When persons try to exercise their desire through the space management system in a rural settlement, they actually follow a certain model of a preferred place, which is a 'village'. The concept of 'village' as an ideal place is deeply embedded not only in people's minds but also in the system.

5.2. The Idea of the Village⁹⁹

5.2.1. A site of value

The Oxford English Dictionary defines 'village' as follows:

A collection of dwelling-houses and other buildings, forming a centre of habitation in a country district; an inhabited place larger than a hamlet and smaller than a town, or having simpler organization and administration than the latter

As far as this definition is concerned the term 'village' can be easily and directly translated into most other languages. However, such a translation may fail to carry the overwhelmingly positive connotation of this powerfully evocative word¹⁰⁰. In his lecture on the English village, the rural vicar and sociologist A. J. Russell described it in this way:

The word 'village' to the average Englishman is like a telegram in code; at its mention his mind is flooded with a series of pictures, impressions and beliefs which have been reinforced in every generation by, among other things, the idyllic way the countryside and its people are treated in children's books (1975: 5).

Geographer David Matless also described the 'village' at the beginning of his analysis of the post-war description of the English village:

The English village can be regarded as a mythic figure ... a figure where people have located emotions, wishes, hopes, anger and more, a site of values which are by no means tied to a rural location¹⁰¹ (1994: 7).

In other words, 'village', or 'the English village', is a vehicle for various emotions: joy, relief, peace, certainty, satisfaction, security, kindness, friendliness, nostalgia, freedom. As Russell claimed, the word alone is enough to conjure up all these emotions, which then determine the value of the place. In his hugely influential

⁹⁹ In this section I shall interweave the general image of 'the English village' in the English imagination, as expressed in various media, with those images shared by the persons of Colwall since the latter is heavily influenced by the former.

¹⁰⁰ In many languages, a word for a small-scale rural settlement tends to have both positive and negative connotations. However, in English those negative connotations tend to be expressed by other words, such as 'parochial' or 'provincial'.

¹⁰¹ The location of 'village' is often mentioned (eg Elias and Scotson 1965, Taylor 1973, Edwards 2000: 78). It may not be tied to a rural location geographically but culturally these two are virtually inseparable. After all, 'village' in an urban setting is the second sense of the word, which often is a part of an effort to distinguish a certain area from surrounding anonymous buildings. Here again, the

portrait of a Suffolk village, *Akenfield*, Ronald Blythe wrote as follows:

The townsman envies the villager his certainties and, in Britain, has always regarded urban life as just a temporary necessity. One day he will find a cottage on the green and 'real values'. To accommodate the almost religious intensity of the regard for rural life in this country, and to placate the sense of guilt which so many people feel about not living on a village pattern ... (1999: 15).

After enumerating various village features, he claimed:

Akenfield, on the face of it, is the kind of place in which an Englishman has always felt it his right and duty to live. It is patently the real country, untouched and genuine. A holy place ... (op. cit: 17).

'Village' is presented as a 'proper', 'right' place, even perhaps 'sacred'. This might be a slight exaggeration, but it seems to convey the general feeling towards the 'village' in England very well¹⁰².

This strong attachment to the notion of 'village' is also shared by persons in Colwall. As I mentioned in Chapter 3, whether Colwall is a village or not is a contentious issue there. When the planning officer from Herefordshire Council casually expressed her view at the parish council meeting that Colwall could be a market town, the audience reacted furiously. Their shock and anger was palpable, as if being called a town was an even more serious threat than the development project itself. Persons in Colwall are generally quite sensitive about how the place is

connotation of the urban village is entirely positive.

¹⁰² The feeling is commercially well exploited in the current development of new settlements in rural areas. At Bolnore, the settlement is called 'Bolnore village' not just 'Bolnore'. The developer laid stone ruins at the settlement, on which the name of the settlement was inscribed. Bolnore 'village' is one of the model 'villages' recently developed in the countryside. It is an entirely new settlement of 800 houses built from scratch in West Sussex. The developer of the settlement not only built the houses in retro styles but also fabricated a 'village history' to attract potential customers. An architect of the settlement told the *Guardian* newspaper 'The story of the village is part of the dream. It's important that people can relate to it when they move in. And, hopefully because we're developing a heart to the community, it'll settle down very quickly'. The styles of architecture used in of the settlement consist of various period styles designed after extensive studies of local vernacular buildings. They include 'converted' farm workers' cottages, almshouses, and farmstables, all of which are brand-new buildings for residential purposes. Properties in the settlement were sold like hot cakes. (The *Guardian* (Weekend Magazine) 20/10/2001, The *Daily Telegraph* (Property supplement) 11/5/2002) The same device is used in Cardrona, near Peebles in Scotland, where 200 houses with an adjacent golf course have been built in the middle of the countryside. Immaculate brand-new houses are zoned according to their price. If one can ignore the landscape of the surrounding countryside, Cardrona could easily be one of those suburban developments found in towns and cities anywhere in the country. However, in a letter and a brochure produced by the developer, the settlement is always referred to as 'Cardrona Village', and on all the nearby road signs, it is also described as 'Cardrona Village'.

described. Each time I mentioned that Colwall was a suburb of Malvern, I was gently corrected. Perhaps a town is too big to be an independent place in the imagination, and a suburb is not an independent place but a mere attachment to somewhere else. In my random household survey, all 45 people answered that Colwall was a village and showed pride at living in such a place.

Strathern noticed the importance of this concept of village and claimed that it was a key concept in English social life (1982b: 249). What is this site of value comprised of is the question to ask, which I will consider in the following sections.

5.2.2. A bounded entity

When one opens the Colwall Village Design Statement, the first thing that catches the eye is a pastel-coloured illustration of the settlement drawn by a member of the VDS team. In the illustration Colwall is presented as an isolated settlement nestling along the western slope of the Malvern Hills. Houses are marked by small red dots; they are clustered along the main road, which makes a sharp contrast with the surrounding green fields, and as a result the settlement stands out as a unit. The Colwall Village Society also produced a parish pictorial map in 2002 to commemorate the Queen's Golden Jubilee. Again the settlement is presented in the same way. Both illustrations were drawn as a bird's eye view, based on aerial photographs.

Matless described a 'typical' image of the English village as follows:

the village foreground in English imaginations tends to be a particular version; nucleated, clearly bounded, with particular features and a specific topographical setting. ... This nucleated English village tends to have a focus, often the church, physically, historically and emotionally at the core. And the place, clearly edged, seems to have its land, its parish, gathered around it. Often the village is presented grouped in a valley, nestling ... Village and landscape in visual symbiosis (1994: 77).

The two illustrations of Colwall fit this description almost exactly, except for the church which stands well outside of the settlement area. The impression is of visual and physical isolation and the sense of being enclosed which is often expressed within the idea of the village.

Strathern's description of 'village' also made the same point in a different way:

Villages are represented by name as block units with a potential for opposed interests ... They (villages) do form discrete geographical and administrative clusters of dwellings, with names (1982b: 255, 256).

Thus, 'village' is generally perceived as a united and independent entity, which has its own name and is assumed to have its own character. Russell also emphasised the importance of physical boundedness:

the most significant fact about a village is the existence of its boundary. The social composition of a village may be only slightly different from a suburb, but its boundary makes it a recognisable unit with which people can identify. People speak of belonging to a village, by which they mean that they identify themselves with the unit (1975:13).

The residents of Colwall also stress the importance of its boundaries. In the VDS, the importance of both the Malvern Hills and the open 'parkland', which serve as entrances at each end of the settlement, was featured. The importance of the Malvern Hills is often expressed by the residents, which stems partly from its physical dominance of the area, but is also raised by the symbolic importance of the hills. As I mentioned in Chapter 3, the eastern end of Colwall is actually almost seamlessly connected to the town of Great Malvern to which Colwall is closely linked both socially and economically. When I pointed out this fact and said that Colwall was virtually a suburb of Malvern, many people did not accept my view. Although they admitted the close link between Colwall and Malvern, they pointed out the existence of the hills: 'But look at the hill! The hill divides Colwall and Malvern. You see, we are not a suburb of Malvern.' They also mentioned the dramatic effect of passing through Wyche Cutting, a narrow gouge made on the ridge, when they come from Malvern. Some of them mentioned the county boundary, which is also the ridge of the hills, which separates Colwall from Malvern. Colwall is in Herefordshire while Malvern is in Worcestershire: 'You see, we are in a different county.'

The other way one can emphasise the boundaries in Colwall is more official and practical. Malvern Hills District Council, to which Colwall belonged until the 1997 local government reorganisation, drew settlement boundaries in Colwall 'after long and detailed debate'¹⁰³. The VDS highlighted the importance of the settlement

¹⁰³ The settlement boundaries will be adopted by the forthcoming Herefordshire Council Unitary Development Plan in a slightly enlarged form.

boundaries; during the debate on the UDP, the issue of the boundaries was repeatedly raised. Needless to say, these boundaries were drawn to prevent piecemeal developments encroaching into the surrounding green fields. Once adopted, it will be quite unlikely that the planning authority will give planning permission for development outside the boundaries. Thus, the boundaries themselves were drawn to contain development and prevent the expansion of the settlement. However, once drawn these practical boundaries have another effect. Because of the UDP dispute, a map marking the boundaries with thick black lines and colouring in the settlement areas was circulated in Colwall, so that many residents saw the clear shape of the village literally bounded. Although these boundaries did not exactly match the actual outline of the settlement area, they gave people a vivid image of the form of the village.

However, this strong image of the village as a nucleated bounded settlement does not always reflect the reality of the actual shape of English rural settlements. W. G. Hoskins classified English rural settlement into three types:

- 1) green villages: the village grouped around a central green or square
- 2) street villages: the village strung out along a single street
- 3) fragmented villages: the village which - though noticeably a conglomeration of houses - consists of dwellings planted down almost haphazardly, with no evident relationship to each other or to any visible nucleus (1955:59-60).

As Matless pointed out above, it is type 1 that forms a 'typical' village in the English imagination. As a 'typical' English landscape (Hoskins 1986: 62-4, Cosgrove 1993: 299), type 1 is the dominant form of settlement in the east and south of the country (Hoskins do). Type 2 may also be a bounded settlement. In the Welsh borders the dominant type of settlement is 'traditionally' type 3. Colwall was no exception, but because of the historical coincidence of the arrival of the railway and the enterprising families, Colwall became a type 2 village with the element of a centre created by the stone, the station, and shops and hotels. The current settlement boundaries endorse officially, and perhaps unwittingly, the idea of Colwall as a bounded rural settlement; therefore it is a village.

This boundedness is, of course, only applied to buildings and objects inside the settlement, and not to their occupants. Russell mentioned this by referring to a

settlement marked on a map:

Maps serve to confirm the view that villages are social isolates. But a map only shows the spatial relations between settlements and since the new mobility of country people spatial and social relations no longer show any close correlation. It is a record of the physical landscape, not the social landscape (op. cit.: 17).

He also pointed out that:

their (residents') networks will often show that the village is the focus for only a small part of their social interaction (do).

It is this combination of a fixed framework and fluid contents that made Strathern use 'village' as a metaphor for the English social category of 'class' (1981, 1982ab, 1984). The boundaries are permeable. People move freely in and out of the boundaries, which makes little practical difference for those who live inside. Yet, they are still there.

The villager, whether he is 'native born' or 'urban expatriate', regards the village as a unit, separate and distinct from other similar units. Whatever may be the strength of his network relations with other areas ... he will still regard the village as distinct and having a life of its own (Russell op. cit.: 13).

This sentiment for the 'village' was echoed by the residents of Colwall. In the household survey, most of the respondents expressed concern about Colwall losing its village character. What they thought caused this loss of 'village-ness' was not always the same. Some, especially elderly residents, were worried about an everincreasing number of in-migrants, which I will discuss in the next section. However, the majority referred to housing developments, especially those on green fields, which blurred the boundaries and changed the shape of the settlement.

5.2.3. Inside the boundaries

We have examined the importance of boundaries in the idea of the village, in which I deliberately focused on physical or visible boundaries as opposed to abstract boundaries that can be drawn arbitrarily between any given groups or objects to differentiate them. Village boundaries are more or less fixed in a visible way and recognised as a physical reality by persons who live both inside and outside the settlement.

The next question, then, is concerned with the content within the boundaries. What is supposed to exist in a bounded place called a 'village'? When I asked persons in Colwall what reminded them of 'the English village', they answered the question more or less in the same manner. They typically listed facilities, mainly buildings, which the 'proper' English village should have: that is, a church, a school, a village hall, a post office, a doctor's surgery, shops, pubs, old houses, village greens and a cricket ground or a football pitch. This physical set of facilities seems to me to imply their belief that the proper 'village' should be relatively self-contained. Villagers should be able to pray, to learn, to settle, to have a meeting, to shop and to entertain themselves within the boundaries. Although it is telling that there was little to suggest employment in the list, otherwise it covers most aspects of social life; it is interesting that those aspects of life were expressed through buildings and sites.

Needless to say, this idea of the village as a self-sufficient place is just an image. Most of the working population commute to nearby towns¹⁰⁴, and most of the residents go to these towns on a daily basis for shopping, entertainment, visiting friends and relatives, or business. Colwall, or its residents, is in reality inseparably attached to the towns around it. Few people attend church service regularly, do essential shopping at village shops, or go to the pubs on a regular basis. In other words, this physical set means little for those who live there in terms of practicality. Nevertheless, these facilities have a strong, perhaps symbolic, value for them. Many persons claimed that they used shops, pubs, and the post office 'to support them', 'to keep them going'. In other words, they use those facilities not because they are necessary for them but because they want to keep them and they believe the 'village' should have these facilities. While most of the rural settlements in England had already lost these 'essential' village facilities and become a purely residential area, Colwall still has all of them. When the persons referred to this fact, there was usually a note of pride in their voices.

This idea of self-sufficiency leads us to another assumed character of the village as a bounded place, that is, an idea of the village as an organic entity. Here, 'village' is perceived more as a group of people than as a physical settlement. It is

¹⁰⁴ However, working in Malvern and Ledbury, or even Worcester, is not generally regarded as

assumed that people who live in an enclosed self-sufficient place should be connected to each other in a special way. The word 'organic' implies this connectedness among the residents of the settlement, often expressed by another expression of 'community'; the adjective 'close-knit'. Nigel Rapport referred to this point in his ethnography of a Cumbrian rural settlement:

In the anthropological as in the lay tradition the village community represents an entity which is prior to the modern conurbation and ... something whole and 'natural' (1993: 38).

Prior to this passage, he described the idea of rural 'community':

something more or less closed, holistic, functionally integrated, and consensual; and something opposed to the associational way of life of the town and city (op. cit.: 34).

As Rapport himself pointed out, this idea of community originally comes from Tönnies' classic notion of *Gemeinschaft*: in this particular case *Gemeinschaft* of place (Tönnies 1955: 48-9).

This idea of the English village as an organic entity, or 'community', has evoked two contradictory images in the English imagination: the feudalistic world of paternalism on the one hand and the egalitarian peasant community on the other (Williams 1973: 35-45)¹⁰⁵. The former image is, to put it very simply, based on the two tier class system: the structural superiority of the lord of the manor, or the large landowner, at one end and the structural inferiority of tenant farmers and farm labourers at the other end. This system is supposed to work on a reciprocal relationship between the two tiers, but the image is especially characterised by the role of the landowner as a charitable patron of the place. Under his patronage, people were supposed to maintain a harmonious class relationship: the image of 'Merrie England'. This paternalistic model of the English village has naturally been embraced by people belonging to the superior end of the structure. The other image of the peasant community is based on a utopian idea of primitive communism. In this image, everyone belonged to the same class, while having different skills and knowledge, and did not exploit anyone else but helped each other. The village community was

commuting by local people.

¹⁰⁵ Neither of the images reflected the reality of the rural settlements in England at any point in history, which Williams pointed out clearly. However, what I am discussing here is not the historical reality of the English village but its generally, or vaguely, accepted images.

supposed to consist of a homogenous population bound together by the necessity of mutual help. In these images, the class-bound or the classless, the emphasis has been put on the order and stability of the community and the harmonious relationship of its members. Neither of them includes the element of change or chaos.

In today's Colwall, although some landowners refer to the paternalist model as the ideal form of 'village', most persons express this image through a modified version of the egalitarian model, that is, the 'village' as a community of classless people who know each other personally: 'Everyone knows everyone else'. Typically they contrast village life with life in a suburb. A very successful entrepreneur and his wife, who used to live in the suburbs near Birmingham but now live in a country house outside of the settlement, insisted that the class system they experienced in the suburbs did not exist in Colwall. They told me how the suburbs were clearly divided by class as the prices of property were assumed to be a sign of class. They also mentioned the competitiveness of people in the suburbs as a sign of the class system:

I think suburbia is not a nice place to live. It's a very class thing, you know, which car have you got, where do you send your children to school, how much money have you got? That's where the competition ...

They said that in a rural area, however, people treated each other equally and mixed more easily regardless of their profession. Another comparison with the suburb was made by a retired engineer who lives in a bungalow up on the hill. He described the suburb as a place of alienation:

Hundreds and hundreds of people. All living close to each other and hardly know any of them ... Rows of very similar houses. People have very similar tastes¹⁰⁶.

In contrast, he described the village as a caring place where people pay attention to their neighbours and look after each other. He also said that it consisted of people of various backgrounds and age groups. Then he told me that he thought the village was a 'community' not a 'place'. This sentiment of Colwall as a community was expressed by most of the respondents of the household survey including people from a working-class background.

¹⁰⁶ It is interesting that he made assumptions about the characters of the people through the buildings. I will discuss this point in section 5.3.

However, in reality, Colwall is geographically divided by class in a rather clear way: large country houses and farm houses outside settlement area; large houses in spacious gardens running along the eastern to the northern end of the settlement; detached houses and bungalows in the middle; and ex-council houses in the western end of the settlement, with upper-middle, middle and working-class persons living in the areas respectively. There are exceptions, but generally people do not mix beyond these inner boundaries, especially people belonging to the upper-middle and middle-classes, who value privacy a lot and 'keep themselves to themselves'. A young professional man owning sizeable land in Colwall referred to this point:

K: So, this organic community does not reflect the reality of the countryside?

S: I don't think it's reality. I mean ... it depends, because community really is, I think, a collection of people who have different experiences and backgrounds, and (**) have to work together to make the village work. And I think that happens less and less ...

K: Because people have similar backgrounds?

S: Most people have the same background and most people want to associate with other people who either they've already known or who have a similar background. And they don't have to deal with other people unless they share common interests. And so it's not the community thing really. It's ... I do think that things like shops do tie the village together, but far less... you don't go to the shops to meet people, you know, shops nowadays (***) two, three people and people get served quickly and they choose things and ask things. There's not so much communication ... and, you know, hardly any people go to church any more.

There are places where residents can meet and have close contact with other residents, that is, clubs and societies which are thriving in Colwall. From the Women's Institute (WI) to the Horticultural Society, from the Probus Club to the amateur dramatic society, there are no fewer than 28 clubs and societies in Colwall¹⁰⁷. People are connected by a common interest within the settlement. However, those who participate in these activities are overwhelmingly middle-class. There does not seem

¹⁰⁷ The WI was originally founded in Canada in 1897 to educate rural women with close involvement from the Farmer's Institute and the National Council for Women. The movement was brought into the UK by a Canadian woman in 1913 and the first WI in the UK was formed in Bangor in 1915. The WI in the UK is now a firmly established rural organisation which can be found in virtually every village in England and Wales. The membership is now about 222,000. It is typically understood to be a social organisation for elderly women in rural areas. They are famous for their home-made jam and cakes, and a monthly meeting which starts with the hymn Jerusalem. Although the WI claims its political neutrality, given the members' background it tends to have a conservative stance.

The Probus Club is also a well-established local organisation in England, with about 300,000 members. The aim of the organisation is to provide an opportunity to build a social network for retired PROFESSIONAL and BUSINESS people. This movement also originated in Canada in the 1920s, but the current organisation was formed in Caterham in 1966, with strong support and sponsorship from the Rotary Club, with which it maintains a close relationship to this day. The Probus Club also claims

to be many places where the middle-class and the working class mix. In addition to this class division, there is another division based on the factors of the length of residency and the connection to the settlement. This division is usually presented as a locals vs. incomers division but tends to take the form of established in-migrants vs. new in-migrants in Colwall because of the high proportion of in-migrants. Several people mentioned the school-gate division as an example of this, where young mothers who are newcomers flock on one side and those who are established residents stand on the other while they are waiting for their children.

Despite people knowing about inner divisions, most of them still present Colwall as a community, which implies a place where people are connected in an organic way. When they used the word 'village' to describe Colwall, they overlooked or ignored those inner divisions. This notion of 'village' has a double meaning: a village as a particular space and a village as a certain group of people, or a 'community'. When they refer to the 'village' as a space, it is quite straightforward and everyone means the same 'village'. However, when they refer to the 'village' as a 'community', what someone envisages in his/her mind can be quite different from someone else's image. When they say 'everyone knows everyone else here', 'everyone' does not mean all the residents of the village as a space. 'Everyone' can only be the people belong to the same club or society, in the case of the many middle-class residents, or the people who live in the same block for the working class residents. The difference between these two signifieds can easily be blurred by the use of the same signifiant of 'village'. Strathern focused on the communal or human aspect of 'village', and therefore in her analysis the differences in 'village', especially between the established local and the in-migrants, were considered in detail (1981, 1982ab). By focusing on the human aspect, or on the individual inhabitant whose personal network always goes beyond the village boundaries, she claimed that the idea of 'village' would ultimately vanish from this point of view (1984). It may be the case that the 'village' is seen as a group of persons which can be internally divided and blended into the 'outside'. However, the 'village' I am discussing here is not the only aspect of the notion. Although my main concern here is rather the

political neutrality and aims to raise community awareness among its members.

physical aspect of the notion, it is not possible to separate one aspect from the other since the physical aspect is formed by the human aspect which I will discuss later in this chapter, and the human aspect is constructed with the physical aspect as a basis.

The implied character of the village as an organic entity is, of course, the 'natural' connection of its parts. In other words, the harmonious relationship among the elements which constitute the village is underlined. Therefore anything reminding people of rifts or chaos which disturb the harmony would be regarded as undesirable. However, this emphasis on harmony should not be confused with uniformity. In the village as an organic entity model, each element is supposed to be complementary in its nature. From this point of view, uniformity is regarded as 'un-natural'. The supposed character of the elements is that they are somewhat varied, while still sharing the same 'tone'.

5.2.4. Time and the village

The 'village' in the English imagination not only has a particular form and content but also a peculiar relationship with time. As the two popular models of the English village (ie the paternalistic model and the egalitarian model) as an organic entity suggest, the idea of 'village' is strongly connected to the past. Again, Russell referred to this point:

A consciousness of the past hangs heavily in many villages ... many who live in contemporary villages see themselves as the heirs of a long tradition ... It is related very closely to the past, and continuity (op. cit.: 7).

If its bounded and organic nature presents the 'village' as a site of integration and stability, this temporal aspect adds the adjective 'traditional': a site of traditional integration and stability. What 'tradition' implies here is not simply elements of the past but rather the continuity which runs from past to present. The present overlaps with, or is tinged by, the elements of the past. Although the idea of the 'village' is inseparably connected to the past, it does not mean that the 'village' is fixed in the past. Rather, in the 'village', elements of the past are there in the present. Perhaps because of this strong presence of the past in the present, people often use the word 'timeless' to describe the 'village'. This 'timelessness' does not mean the absence of time but the ubiquitous presence of different times, or different senses of time, to be

precise.

In Colwall, the time is shown on the clock tower standing in the centre of the settlement, which is often used as an icon of the village. This clock tower was built by a local entrepreneur to commemorate his late wife, Alice, in the early 20th century. People therefore call it 'Aunt Alice'. The entrepreneur's great nephew still runs a grocery shop, built by the entrepreneur, in the village. Everyone in Colwall knows this local history. Newcomers to the village will be told this story sooner or later. The present time is wrapped up in history, which has a direct connection to the present.

As the anecdote of Aunt Alice shows, there are two channels through which one may feel these senses of time in a village: people and buildings. Those who are classified as locals are given a kind of natural authority in the locality and are paid a certain respect for this status. In her ethnography of a Suffolk village in the 1960s, Strathern observed that the residents were divided sharply into 'villagers' and 'strangers' from the locals' point of view, or 'core villagers' and 'villagers' from the newcomers' point of view. She went on to analyse the family relationships among the 'core villagers', who consisted of several families who had lived in the settlement for generations (1981, 1982ab). Aside from her academic interest in kinship, it is interesting that the anthropologist, too, paid special attention to certain families. They are assumed to have some special, often privileged, relationship to the place. They may not always be dominant figures there, rather they often play a quite discreet role in local political and economic, or even social, activities. However, if someone expressed their desire to study the 'village', it would certainly be to a member of those families that residents of the settlement would introduce that person. These families are selected by the residents not only for their natural accumulation of local knowledge but also because of what they embody, which is the continuity of the place.

The other factor which sets the sense of time in the 'village' is architecture. Since the 1930s, when the publishing company Batsford started to publish a successful illustrated series on English villages, there has been a constant stock of these books on bookshop shelves (Bunce 1994: 55-6). Batsford marketed the series to

the urban middle-class who had already developed a taste for the English vernacular style through the architecture which had been the standard style in the suburbs known as 'Old English'. (Wiener 1985: 65-6). The English villages in these publications are represented in a particular way. Take the recent publication of the 'village book' genre, for example. In *The Most Beautiful Villages of England*, which was published by the respected publisher Thames and Hudson and received favourable reviews in several newspapers, villages are presented as having a certain architecture with a natural surrounding which might be agricultural fields, hedges, woodlands or brooks (Bentley 1999). In many cases, people who live there are either carefully removed from photographs or arranged as minor elements¹⁰⁸. The buildings selected are unfailingly built in old vernacular styles which suggest to the readers 'cozy, small-scale, antiheroic, evocative of folk life' (Wiener *ibid*). Again, modern elements are carefully removed from the frame. The blurb of the book lures the reader to its contents:

The village inn and the local farm, great houses, humble cottages and beautiful country gardens speak of a way of life which has developed peacefully since Anglo-Saxon times ... So much of English history and legend can be found in these charming rural communities.

Again the emphasis is placed on the continuity of settlements. Villages have been 'developed' in a 'natural' way as if they were living organisms 'since Anglo-Saxon times'. Here, the 'developments' seem to take place without disturbing the peaceful harmony in the settlements. They appear to have been subtle additions to existing elements. Therefore, the village is presented as a harmonious accumulation of past elements. However, this continuity somehow imperceptibly fades out before reaching the very present, which creates a 'timeless' atmosphere surrounding the idea of the village.

The Most Beautiful Village of England is a typical example of the series of 'village books', and it is highly likely that one can find a copy of one of them on a bookshelf in a rural household, or at least in a middle-class one, which is the case in Colwall. Naturally, in these village books, the villages are presented purely as a

¹⁰⁸ Interestingly, if they appear in the frame, they fall into four categories: children playing in a village green or street; elderly people; a farmer or a craftsman; a crowd gathered at some form of traditional activity. All of these can be interpreted as representations of 'bygone' days.

cluster of visual objects or building, those buildings invariably being 'old' or 'traditional' in their appearances. As I mentioned in the previous section, this is also the way persons in Colwall tend to describe the 'village' in the first place. When they list facilities, such as a church, a school, shops and pubs, they do not only refer to their functions but also to the buildings themselves. Although these two aspects are inseparably connected, in many cases the latter aspect is valued much more highly than the former. This is especially true of the church. The rector of Colwall once lamented when I asked him the importance of the church:

K: I mean, the church building, especially the tower or spire of the church, seems to be the essential part of the English village.

D: Oh, geographically, yes, very much so. It's interesting that they seem to be important in terms of their geographical feature. I have to say that I thought the life of the church was pretty dead, didn't really have very much to do with anything (the church he attended when he was a child).

K: But as a sort of substance, it seems to have sort of presence ...

D: Very powerful, yes. It's certainly true here, since people mind about the building whether they go to the church or not. If you threatened to close down the building or knock it down, everyone would be up in arms. Only one in a hundred (actually comes to the church regularly though).

Then he told me about a row over the rearrangement of the pews. Any change, no matter how trivial it is, over an existing physical aspect of the church can be a potential source of conflict. At a neighbouring parish where people are roughly divided into two groups: one at the church and the other at the village hall, one of the residents told me that people in the latter group, who would not pay a penny towards fundraising if it was for the congregation or the priest, are willing to donate money towards the repair of the church building. Kevin Lynch pointed out the same sentiment regarding the historic and symbolic locations in a city:

Many symbolic and historic locations in a city are rarely visited by its inhabitants, however they may be sought out by tourists. But a threat to destroy these places will evoke a strong reaction, even from those who have never seen, and perhaps never will see, them. The survival of these unvisited, hearsay settings conveys a sense of security and continuity (1972: 40).

Unlike Lynch's hearsay urban settings, old buildings in villages are very much part of persons' everyday life. They may not enter the buildings often, but they see them practically every single day. And what they are seeing are perhaps not just the buildings themselves but the time inscribed on their surfaces. In addition to these

essential facilities, many people mentioned old houses, old trees, old hedges or winding lanes when they were asked to describe 'the English village'. It seems to me that what they are expressing is the sediment of time objectified in the forms of certain buildings and natural features as a patina.

It might be true to say that this sedimentation, or continuity, of time in a rural settlement has actually been formed without much conscious effort of succession by its residents. In that sense, it could actually be described as 'natural' to a certain extent. However, the statement no longer holds true. Ever since the late nineteenth century, rural England with villages its focal points has been the object of preservation (see Bunce 1994, Macnaghten & Urry 1998, etc). This preservationist tendency has accelerated since the 1970s (see Matless 1994: 45-6) with the large influx of the urban middle-class population into the villages (Bunce 1994: 100-1). Their conscious obsession for the patina, or the visualised sediment of time, took over from the 'natural' accumulation of time. This conscious effort to control the time of the village along with other ideals is exercised mainly through or with a close connection to the space management system, which itself is not a value-free neutral body of practical rules.

5.3 Regulatory Framework

In this section, I shall first briefly trace the history and character of the British planning system. It is, of course, not part of the scope of this thesis to trace its entire history, and so I shall only cover the points relevant to rural space management, I will particularly focus on the idea of property, which I believe plays a significant role in the formation of sense of place, and its centralisation, that gives us an idea of how strictly the space is controlled by the state and how limited is the room that people have to manoeuvre in. However, within that limited space people in the contemporary English countryside try to form their place in a way that is close to their ideal. In many aspects the British planning regulations are in favour of the ideal. In the second section, I shall describe the actual interaction between people in

Colwall and Dymock and the planning system on the ground there.

5.3.1. The British rural space management system: planning and highway regulations¹⁰⁹

The idea of statutory planning, or the state control of the built environment, originally emerged as a reaction to the rapid and chaotic expansion of Victorian cities, especially the horrific conditions of the slum quarters. In other words, it started predominantly as health and housing control in an urban setting¹¹⁰ (Cullingworth and Nadin 2002: 14, Newby 1979: 228). Although the original nature of urban space control or the solution for urban problems still runs strongly in the British planning system to this day, rural areas came within the scope of the control during the inter-war period, again as a reaction to the social reality of the period. England in the inter-war period, especially in the 1930s, experienced an unprecedented housing boom. During this time, over four million houses were built, which comprised one-third of the total housing stock, mainly on urban fringes in the South East and Midlands (Matless 1998: 34). This rapid large-scale expansion of cities and towns provoked the inevitable result of encroachment into the countryside, about which serious concerns were expressed from various sections of society¹¹¹. The totally unregulated piecemeal housing developments were called 'ribbon developments', and were likened to unruly octopuses destroying the country (cf Williams-Ellis 1928). Conferences were set up by existing countryside amenity lobbies, such as the Society for the Prevention for Abuses in Public Advertising, the Commons Preservation Society, the National Trust, the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, and the Ramblers Association. As a result, it was agreed that it was necessary to create a national umbrella body to protect the countryside from the urban sprawl (Bunce 1994: 184). Thus the Council for the Preservation of Rural England (CPRE) was

¹⁰⁹ This section depends on (Cullingworth and Nadin 2002) which has been regarded as a standard textbook for planning.

¹¹⁰ This nature was reflected in the name of the first planning act in the UK: Housing and Town Planning Act 1909.

¹¹¹ cf George Orwell's 1932 novel *Coming Up for Air* and John Betjeman's 1937 poem *Slough*, for example.

formed in 1926 under the strong leadership of an influential town planner, Patrick Abercrombie.

The CPRE lost no time in starting to lobby the government to introduce regulations to control development in the countryside. As its name clearly indicates, the CPRE's aim was to contain developments in urban areas and to keep the rural areas intact. Their efforts were rewarded by Ramsey MacDonald's national government¹¹², which introduced the first Town and Country Planning Act in 1932 and the Restriction of Ribbon Development Act 1935. The 1932 Act extended the existing regulations of space control in urban areas to the whole national territory which was divided into the two categories of town and country¹¹³.

Although the legislation was flawed in many respects and failed to stop the urban sprawl in the 1930s, the direction and the spirit of English rural space management was clearly and firmly established, taking the preservationist approach. The ineffectual aspects of the legislation were closely examined during World War II by the three influential royal commissions of Barlow, Scott and Uthwatt. All three reports produced by the commissions confirmed the preservationist approach. Abercrombie, who was also a member of the Barlow commission, wrote in his highly influential planning textbook *Town and Country Planning* in 1933:

The essence of the æsthetic of Town and Country Planning consists in the frank recognition of these two elements, *town* and *country*, as representing opposite but complementary poles of influence ... With these two opposites constantly in view, a great deal of confused thinking and acting is brushed away; the town should indeed be frankly artificial, urban; the country natural, rural (Abercrombie 1933: 18-19, cited in Newby 1979: 230)

Here, the lay dichotomy of town and country and their presumed characteristic, artificiality and naturalness, were confirmed by the authority and cast in legislation.

¹¹² His predecessor, Stanley Baldwin, who called himself 'farmer Stan' and made his famous anachronistic speech praising the idealised English rural life in 1924, and his Conservative government appeared to be a more appropriate administration to introduce such an Act to protect the countryside. But they were actually against the idea of state intervention in private properties (Matless 1998: 30). The idea of 'planned' countryside itself did not correspond to the Tories' idea of the English countryside as a 'natural' place (Newby 1979: 228). Therefore the final Act introduced by the national government, which was formed mainly by the Tories, fell far short of the campaigners' expectation and protected landowners' rights.

¹¹³ This state intervention in rural space management was also part of the general political and economic policies in the inter-war period when the nineteenth-century model of laissez-faire governing brought about a series of crises and was replaced by Keynesian or Fascist state intervention models (Matless 1998: 29-30).

In this national zoning of town and country, the 'naturalness' of the countryside is supposed be achieved, or preserved, by keeping the rural status quo intact through strict control. This preservationist attitude toward the countryside has been tightly maintained in planning policies to this day. It is often pointed out that the British planning system is highly effective in stopping development rather than in managing it (Cullingworth and Nadin 2002: 12).

As a result of the reports, the Town and Country Planning Act was reintroduced in 1947 by Attlee's post-war Labour government. The 1947 Act, along with a range of Labour policies, made drastic changes to space management in England, which nationalised virtually most of the development rights in the national territory¹¹⁴ (Cullingworth and Nadin 2002: 21, Shoard 1997: 351, Newby 1979: 232). A prospective developer could only recover this right by obtaining planning permission from the authority (Shoard 1997: 351). In other words, the 1947 Act changed the English concept of property ownership at a stroke. Before the Act, property ownership, especially in rural areas, in England had been more or less purely individualistic, which allowed its owner to exercise absolute power over his land, and the common law was designed to protect such rights (Cullingworth and Nadin 2002: 364). However, the Act introduced severe restrictions to ownership¹¹⁵. One could own the land, but this ownership was not absolute since there were certain things which one could not do on one's own land. The land, then, was not regarded as a simple commodity.

This restriction on private property was further strengthened in 1949 by the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act. In addition to creating National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty to protect renowned landscapes and the quality of their amenities for the general public, the 1949 Act also confirmed the

¹¹⁴ However, agriculture and forestry were left outside this legislative framework and their freedom from state control was kept intact. This exemption was made partly because of the images of the industries in the post-war and pre-intensive era when agriculture and forestry were regarded as guardians of the countryside and 'ways of life' rather than industries (Shoard 1997: 355-6). Another factor was the sheer political influence of powerful land-related lobbies, such as the National Farmers' Union and the Country Landowners' Association (Newby 1979: 233).

¹¹⁵ This attitude toward property ownership is in stark contrast with continental European and American systems, which put more emphasis on individual property rights (Cullingworth and Nadin 2002: 1).

unambiguous legal status of the existing Rights of Way (RoW) network¹¹⁶ throughout England and Wales as public highways. The origins of RoW are obscure but they have always existed as everyday passages for ordinary people in rural areas, connecting strategic points in the countryside as shortcuts, such as a settlement to fields or a farmstead to a church (Cullingworth and Nadin 2002: 272, Shoard 1997: 265). RoW may go across any kind of public or private properties, which include mountains and moors, agricultural fields, woodlands, and landscaped estate gardens, regardless of their boundaries. It was a customary common right for ordinary people to enter and pass through those properties through RoW. However, before the 1949 Act, legal protection for this ancient right against landowners had been less than satisfactory.

The 1949 Act was the result of long and bitter conflicts between landowners and ramblers in the 1930s over the public right of access to the countryside, or the right to roam. Rambling has been a very popular recreation for working-class people especially those from northern industrial towns¹¹⁷. Their desire to wander freely in the countryside and the landowners' desire to exclude the public from their properties and to exercise absolute control over them clashed head-on, which culminated with the mass trespass of Kinder Scout in 1932¹¹⁸. After the incident, the influential Ramblers Association was formed in 1935, which led a vigorous campaign to establish the right to access the countryside. Along with the report produced by the Hobhouse commission, their efforts were rewarded by the Labour government with

¹¹⁶ This very unique form of public road system covers the whole national territory. According to the Countryside Commission, there are approximately 169,000 km of rights of way in England, which includes footpaths (78%), bridleways (17%), byways (2%), and Roads Used as Public Paths (3%) (1994a: 5). RoW may be likened to capillaries in a human body, if main roads are arteries and veins.

¹¹⁷ Rambling in the UK was closely linked with working-class and socialist movements, which had a strong belief that walking on land was a natural right for the ordinary people. Their belief was strengthened especially after World War I, in which many people were mobilised and killed through repeated government propaganda that exploited the image of the countryside as something irreplaceably precious to defend and die for (Shoard 1997: 85, Howkins 1986: 79-82).

¹¹⁸ On 24 April 1932, 400 ramblers led by the British Workers' Federation, a communist organisation, trespassed into the Duke of Devonshire's estate to reach the highest point of the Peak District, which did not have any public access, after confronting 30 of the Duke's gamekeepers, and six leaders were arrested. At the trial, 20-year-old mechanic Benny Rothman stated (Shoard 1997: 85-6, *The Guardian* (Society) 17/4/2002):

We ramblers, after a hard week's work in smoky towns and cities, go out rambling for relaxation, a breath of fresh air, a little sunshine... But we find when we go out that the finest rambling country is

the 1949 Act. The Act gave local authorities the power and obligation to protect RoW. Since then, recording of the existing paths has slowly progressed, and once recorded on the 'definitive map' the paths are under strong legal protection and the landowners have little scope for dismissing them, at least in theory. As the old maxim states: once a highway, always a highway¹¹⁹. The 1949 Act and the subsequent efforts made by various organisations led to the establishment of the RoW network, which has made a great contribution to the shifting concept of property in the countryside. A booklet produced by the Countryside Commission with the Country Landowners' Association and the National Farmers' Union in 1994 started with the following phrases:

It is very unusual indeed for individual landowners to have absolute control of all the property rights associated with their land ... The rights held by the public over private property, in particular, rights of access over defined routes, or over defined areas of land, are no different in legal terms from the property rights vested in any other person or body (Countryside Commission 1994b: 4).

Although the direction towards which public perception of the concept of property in the countryside was to shift was clearly established by those Acts, the actual implementations depended very much on the government at the time. The Conservative administrations from 1951 to 1963 dismantled the Labour planning system, which was symbolised by the renaming of the Labour created Ministry of Town and Country Planning to the Ministry of Housing and Local Government. They concentrated on increasing the number of houses, which was the highest public demand, both in the private and public sectors, and encouraged housing developments rather than controlling them¹²⁰.

Controls on rural space returned with Wilson's Labour government, which first introduced the Civic Amenities Act in 1967. The 1967 Act was the

closed to us, just because certain individuals wish to shoot for about 10 days a year.

¹¹⁹ However, in reality a not small number of paths are still obstructed in one way or another., and many applications to divert or extinguish existing paths are approved by the highway authorities every year (Shoard 1997: 267).

¹²⁰ The only exception of this current was the Green Belt policy introduced in 1955. However, this policy was realised only because of the adamant insistence of the then Housing minister, Duncan Sandys, against many oppositions. The idea was to contain developments within urban areas, which incidentally encouraged tower blocks, and to stop towns and cities merging each other by encroaching the countryside in-between. It was an interesting example of the desires to keep the boundaries of settlements clear and to protect the countryside. The Green Belts turned out to be the most popular planning policy of all time (Cullingworth and Nadin 2002: 179-180).

government's response to rapidly growing public interest in spatial amenity in terms of both the natural and the man-made environment in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Here, the preservation of sites of natural and historic interest, including a village in terms of both the physical settlement and a particular life and activities associated with it, came into the centre of national attention. Many amenity societies, both national and local formed during this period joined the existing conservation organisations to protect them (Macnaghten and Urry 1998: 43). The 1967 Act made it a statutory duty for the local planning authorities to locate an area of historic and architectural interest and designate it as a Conservation Area. Once designated as a Conservation Area, much stricter planning control is supposed to be applied to the area as a whole¹²¹, including trees¹²².

The next layer of control was created by the Town and Country Planning Act in 1968. The 1968 Act introduced a two-tier development control system, consisting of a structure plan, which was prepared by county councils for strategic issues, and a local plan, which was prepared by district councils for detailed tactical issues. Every development plan, or planning application, was to be assessed in the light of these two plans. The 1968 Act also created the Countryside Commission, which replaced the National Park Commission and had wider powers and an improved budget, to monitor the whole rural area and to create policies to manage it. Furthermore, the Act also introduced Listed Building Consent, which made it a criminal offence to demolish or alter listed buildings without consent¹²³. Applications

¹²¹ However, in reality, owing to staff and resource shortages in the local planning authorities, the actual implementation and monitoring after the designation tends to be less than adequate in many areas. There were 8,819 Conservation Areas in England in 1999, and the number is still increasing, most of which are initiated by requests from local residents. Yet there is no statutory procedure of designation. It depends on the arbitrary decision of local planning authorities which do not even have to individually inform those who live in the area who would be affected by the designation. (Cullingworth and Nadin 2002: 243).

¹²² Since the 1947 Act local planning authorities have retained powers to protect trees and woodland, in the interest of amenity, in the form of the Tree Preservation Order (TPO). Once under the order, it is illegal to cut, uproot or even prune the trees without planning permission. Designation as a Conservation Area automatically puts all trees which satisfy the requirement under the TPO.

¹²³ Listing of ancient and historic monuments and buildings started in 1908 by the Royal Commissions of the Historical Monuments. However, their aim was simply to make an inventory of such objects, and they did not have any power to protect them. Because of the slowness of the work of the Commissions, the Department of Environment took it over in 1944, and has been under the control of the English Heritage since 1983. There were 453,011 listed buildings in England in 1999. The authorities in charge have not been under any obligation to consult owners of the buildings regarding

for consent must, in addition, be advertised in the local press, just as in the case of ordinary planning applications, in order to invite public.

Although planning control was slackened by Thatcher's Conservative government, centralisation, on the other hand, was accelerated during her time. The government issued comprehensive national planning guidance in the form of Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPGs) in 1988 and Regional Planning Guidances (RPGs) in 1989. These documents set down general principles on every aspect of land use in the national territory¹²⁴. Each local authority has to establish its space management policies in the form of Structure Plan and Local Plan within the framework set by these guidances, and each planning application is assessed in light of these plans¹²⁵.

5.3.2. Interaction with regulations: planning and access

The Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan (UDP) that I described in Chapter 3 is being prepared in order that it meets the requirement of the Town and Country Planning Act. In other words, it is a process which will incorporate Herefordshire land-use policies into the national framework of space management. The normally remote phenomenon of national policy had been the centre of people's attention in Colwall for more than a year. The UDP in Colwall was essentially a housing development plan which was allocated to satisfy the national target of housing provision. It is quite interesting to see elements of the idea of the village appearing

their listing (Cullingworth and Nadin 2002: 231-2, 236, Dobby 1978: 33-4). The English Heritage is currently preparing to put images of and statements regarding all those buildings on its own webpage. The project is being carried out by local volunteers.

¹²⁴ The idea of planning guidance emerged in Scotland in the 1970s when the country was faced sudden large-scale development caused by North Sea oil and gas.

There are now 25 PPGs: 1. General Policy and Principles, 2. Green Belts, 3. Housing, 4. Industrial and Commercial Development and Small Farms, 5. Simplified Planning Zones, 6. Town Centre and Retail Development, 7. The Countryside, 8. Telecommunications, 9. Nature Conservation, 10. Planning and Waste Management, 11. Regional Planning, 12. Development Plans, 13. Transport, 14. Development on Urban Land, 15. Planning and Historic Environment, 16. Archaeology and Planning, 17. Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation, 18. Enforcing Planning Control, 19. Outdoor Advertisement Control, 20. Coastal Planning, 21. Tourism, 22. Renewable Energy, 23. Planning and Pollution Control, 24. Planning and Noise, 25. Development and Flood Risk.

¹²⁵ Under the current Labour government, this centralisation is maintained in a more complex way. While it has retained PPGs and RPGs, the government is now trying to devolve planning authorities from district councils or unitary authorities onto parish councils. At the same time, for protected areas such as National Parks and AONBs, the government is currently in the process of shifting planning

both in the principles of the UDP and in people's reaction to this plan.

The Herefordshire UDP¹²⁶ follows very closely the PPGs and RPGs¹²⁷. Outside the towns, development is concentrated in 'key settlements', or settlements which have facilities such as schools and shops. This strategy is set by PPG1 under the aegis of 'sustainable development'. PPG1 advocates a particular type of development not just in rural areas but also in urban areas, that development being a 'village' model. The village, or urban village¹²⁸, model is characterised by 'compactness, a mixture of uses and dwelling types, a range of employment, leisure and community facilities, high standard of design, etc.' In other words, it is a bounded place with people of various backgrounds who both live and work there, implying self-sufficiency. The UDP stresses the importance of high-quality design reflecting local distinctiveness, which it claims, 'reinforces civic pride and a sense of place'. Furthermore, such a development should not disturb the existing harmony of the settlement 'in terms of layout, density, means of access and enclosure, scale, mass, height, design and materials'. Here, appearance or harmony of appearance is emphasised, through which residents are supposed to feel a sense of place. The UDP also emphasised the importance of settlement boundaries, outside which development should be strictly limited in order to prevent encroachment on the open countryside and to maintain the existing shape of the settlement.

Persons in Colwall reacted to the UDP by mobilising the idea of the village. First of all, the sense of boundaries was quickly established. Here the boundaries were mental as well as physical borders to enclose them. The UDP was perceived as an unwanted burden imposed from 'outside', which was threatening to change

powers from local authorities to those conservation bodies.

¹²⁶ At the time of writing this thesis, the UDP is not yet complete, and so I have consulted, and refer to, drafted plan, which is, however, more or less the final version of the plan.

¹²⁷ One of the council planners confessed to me that there was very limited room for manoeuvre in the creation of their own space management plan. He said that they tried to give local colour to the plan by describing the characteristics of Herefordshire in the first chapter following the introduction. However, the following chapters are an almost verbatim interpretation of PPGs and RPGs.

¹²⁸ Using the 'village' model to form a urban or semi-urban space is nothing new in the history of British town planning. The garden cities were created under the strong influence of the model, which itself ironically set the model of suburban space thereafter. The advocate Ebenezer Howard was influenced by Kropotkin's idea of a self-contained organic community, and the architects were followers of William Morris's arts and crafts movement, which set the medieval English village as the ideal form of community in terms of both the physical and the human aspects (Bunce 1994: 158-63).

Colwall from a village to a town. The 'outside' was represented by the planning officers of Herefordshire Council to whom open hostility was expressed in public meetings¹²⁹. My household survey showed that housing development was universally unpopular in Colwall. Regardless of their background, people expressed strong opposition to housing development. They were particularly opposed to those who may change the settlement boundaries. Breaking the boundaries would mean ribbon developments, which would create an amorphous impression of their locality. The proposed sites of the UDP housing development in Colwall were outside the settlement boundaries.

However, many of them acknowledged the necessity of affordable houses for local people, which, they told me, should be met by in-fill development. Here, another boundary was drawn to show who had a right to live there or to change the shape of the settlement. During the debate over the UDP, it was repeatedly expressed that new housing development should be limited to those who already lived in Colwall or who had family connections in Colwall¹³⁰. Although more than half the population in Colwall are in-migrants who moved the last 15 years, hostility against 'outsiders' was often expressed from every quarter. However, this sense of 'outsider' is quite specific. Those who move into existing housing stock are almost always met with a warm welcome from residents. Colwall is rather good at incorporating newcomers. Unwanted outsiders are those who have the potential to change the shape of the settlement. Whether it is the county, the state or potential migrants, as soon as someone tries to alter the current shape of the settlement, the boundary is quickly drawn to denounce the legitimacy of such an act.

¹²⁹ This shows the ambiguous position of the planners. Part of their job is to protect existing settlement from undesirable developments, but at the same time they have to implement the government development policies.

¹³⁰ This 'residency test' is hardly a unique demand of Colwall. The New Forest council in Hampshire caused controversy by proposing the introduction of a new planning policy to give permission for a development only when it is for people who work or live within their jurisdiction. However, they make an exception for those who have a blood relationship with residents in New Forest. (*The Guardian* (society supplement) 13/2/2002). Jedrej and Nutall (1996: 18-19) also refer to the similar test in the Scottish Highlands regarding access to low-cost housing. Housing stock is crucial element in the drawing of a line between the insider and the outsider in rural areas, and planning regulations are often mobilised to objectify the line.

Herefordshire UDP itself stresses the importance of local needs and gives them priority over the needs of outsiders. However, 'local' here does not necessarily mean Colwall.

During the uncertain period in which people protested against the development, the word, and notion of, 'village' was most frequently used to express the opposition against the plan, as I described in Chapter 3. According to the housing need survey conducted by Herefordshire Council, the most popular reason for objection was 'the loss of village life and identity', which accounted for 21%¹³¹. In my own survey, which was conducted a year after the withdrawal of the development plan, most of the respondents expressed their wish to keep Colwall as a village which they thought was on the verge of becoming a suburb or town. The memory of the UDP was still quite clear at the time, so that most of the 45 respondents expressed their opposition to housing development when I asked what they wanted to keep and change in Colwall: 'I don't want any more housing development', 'I want to keep Colwall as it is. No more houses.' They believed that housing development destroyed the village character. And when I asked what that character was, they started to describe to me the idea of the village I described in the previous section: it is a bounded settlement physically separated from other places, which is more or less self-contained, with various facilities and its own council. Within the boundaries, people know each other by name or by sight, some of them describing it as a close-knit community. They believed all of these characteristics would be destroyed by housing development. It would break and obscure the boundaries, and would also break the existing harmony of the settlement by introducing rows of 'unsympathetic' suburban houses. It is interesting here that when they described the 'village character', they referred to both the physical and the human aspects, whereas when it came to the threat to the character only the physical aspect was highlighted¹³².

Prior to the UDP, people in Colwall were faced with two controversial

¹³¹ Other reasons were below:

2) enough development/home already: 16.4 (%), 3) no unsympathetic development and local needs not met in the past: 8.2, 4) too much development already: 7.2, 5) pressure on school and only for local need, 6.7, 6) pressure on health services: 6.2, 7) detrimental to environment/green areas: 5.6, 8) pressures on drainage/sewage system: 4.6, 9) pressure on infrastructure and only for affordable homes and smaller plots only: 4.1, 10) no evidence for local need and infill/brown field/renovation development only: 3.6, 11) pressure on amenities/services: 3.1, 12) only within existing village boundaries and no development land available and traffic would increase: 2.1, 13) public transport unable to cope: 1.5

¹³² However, some long-standing elderly residents complained about the ever increasing number of incomers, by which they indirectly referred to the threat of the loss of the human aspect of the village for them.

housing developments recently, which is the main reason they were so sensitive about housing development and planning issues. People's reactions to the developments unwittingly showed their ideal of the village. One of these developments is Brookmill Close, which was mentioned in Chapter 3. Brookmill Close was a cul-de-sac of 32 houses, including seven social houses at the end of the cul-de-sac.

It was developed along a brook in 1998 and is now frequently flooded after heavy rain. People are deeply sceptical about the way the planning permission was given to this development. However, that is not the main reason for its unpopularity among Colwall residents. As I mentioned, houses in Brookmill Close are often described as 'too suburban', by which people mean that the styles of houses are identical. They are also criticised for having been built using the 'wrong materials'. The houses are either two-story detached or terraced houses. They are non-descript boxes which can be found in any settlement in the UK, possibly even anywhere in the Western world. They look identical and are built using exactly the same materials. The materials are industrially produced, shiny, hard red bricks and white UPVC windows. Neither of the materials are strangers to Colwall, but were previously not used in this concentration. Brookmill Close clearly stands out from other parts of



Plate14: Brookmill Close

Colwall to the extent that even a driver going past the settlement cannot help noticing

it. One resident predicted that 'it may be blended with other parts of Colwall in 50 years' time'. But not now. One member of the Village Design Statement team told me that 'Brookmill Close brought a row of modern catalogue houses of bright red brick into the village.' People do not like Brookmill Close because it is so at odd with other parts of Colwall in its cluster of uniformity. In other words, it breaks the harmony of the settlement. People do not like the materials used because it makes the settlement look so brand-new and so modern. In other words, it highlights the notion of time, which is not expected to be evident in the 'village'.

The other unpopular development is a three-story block of flats, called 'Colditz' by the local people, built on 'Lockyear's site'. Lockyear's site is the south-east corner of the Stone junction, where a Mr. Lockyear used to have his garage and filling station. It marks the very centre of the settlement. After Mr. Lockyear's death in 1994, the site was sold to a developer outside Colwall. Although the developer had already been given an outline planning permission for sheltered accommodation for elderly people, this very central site had been left as a junkyard. However, as soon as the parish council started to discuss the possibility of purchasing the site and creating a communal building there, the developer submitted another planning application to build a block of luxury flats, to which a number of residents of Colwall expressed their opposition. A public meeting was then called by the parish council to discuss this application. The 50 people who attended were against the plan. Their concern was mainly about its design. They thought it was 'at odd with' other buildings in Colwall; it made its height too overpowering, a feature which would also obstruct the views to and from the hills. The proposed external design was considered to be too urban in style, and therefore regarded as 'unsuitable' for the 'rural village'.

Taking these strong local feelings into consideration, the Malvern Hills District Council, to which Colwall belonged at that time, twice rejected the application. However, having given outline planning permission in the past, the planning authority could not keep rejecting the application without sound planning reasons, and the newly created Herefordshire Council gave the builder permission at last, just as he was planning to take legal action against the council. Just as people

had feared, the completed building turned out to be a rather appalling mass of bricks with a token gesture made to harmonise its design with that of the neighbouring hotel. Soon people started to call it 'Colditz', after the dismal German castle used to imprison Allied POWs that was embedded in the minds of British people above a certain age through the 1970s BBC television series.



Plate 15: Colditz

The reasons behind people's objections to 'Colditz' were the same as those objection to Brookmill Close estate. They considered that it was 'not in keeping with' other buildings in Colwall in terms of its height and design, and was regarded as breaking the harmony of the settlement. It is onestory higher than other buildings in Colwall, which creates a dominant, bulky-impression at the centre of the settlement. The attempt to harmonise its design with the surroundings by putting black and white timber frame walls at the corners of the top floor was flatly dismissed as 'poor suburban mock-Tudor'. People also did not like its UPVC

windows and its inevitable brand-new atmosphere¹³³. Stranger still, even the architect seems to agree with the Colwall people. On a draft perspective drawn by the architect, the three-story building was somehow depicted as being exactly the same height as the neighbouring two-story Park Hotel, and its exterior colour (and its weariness of age) was also exactly the same as the hundred-year old Park Hotel. In short, persons in Colwall expressed strong objections to these elements, and the architect tried to conceal them, being against the idea of the village¹³⁴.

The bitter experiences of Brookmill Close and 'Colditz' prompted some residents in Colwall to get more involved with planning issues in the settlement. At the parish council, some councillors started to look into the possibility of receiving the designation of Conservation Area, in order to tighten up planning control, which would prevent further undesirable development later materialise. The Village Society, which was formed partly because of the developments, immediately started to produce the Village Design Statement (VDS). The VDS was produced as a design guideline for future developments which in effect stated 'local' people's desired form of settlement. The details of the VDS have already been described in Chapter 3. Here the idea of the village was expressed exclusively in visual terms. At the beginning of

¹³³ The negative feelings towards brand-new material are quite strong. On various occasions when I was given a lift or gave a lift to someone, they stopped the car (or made me stop) in front of those buildings and said to me 'Look at this!'. Usually there was no further explanation, and the expected reaction was 'Gosh, it's terrible!'.

In the case of 'Colditz', the planning authority gave planning permission on the condition that samples of the external walls and roof would be submitted before starting construction. This, however, did not make much difference in terms of the feeling of time these materials created.

¹³⁴ Objection to the building was rock-solid. Even an estate agent was dismissive about it. The only person I have seen who assessed the building positively was a Canadian woman who had recently married into Colwall. However, as soon as she expressed her fondness for the building, her husband dismissed her gently and suggested to her that praising it was not the right thing to do.

These objections, based on the idea of the village, were directed towards the actual building, and people insisted that they did not have any objections to those who would move into the building. That was true, although, not entirely so. The flats were sold as luxury two-bedroom flats, worth an average £ 140,000. During the early stages of the objection, several people expressed concern that the type of flats, ie two-bedroom, would be difficult to sell, and un-sold flats could be used for social housing, which was not desirable at the centre of the village. The parish council made a petition to the planning authority not to allow any social housing on the site. The same concern about low-cost housing was also expressed in the opposition to the UDP. In a letter to Herefordshire Council, the parish council recommended a particular site for affordable houses. They selected the land adjacent to Orlin Road which was slightly outside the main settlement and originally developed as social housing for fruitpickers and which still tends to be regarded as a working-class 'rough' area by many residents in Colwall. Here, despite the idea of harmony in village, the reality of zoning according to social class is presented explicitly.

the project, people in the VDS team went out with cameras to identify 'the local distinctiveness' in Colwall, which resulted in a series of compact descriptions of the settlement. However, the prevailing emphasis among the guidelines and the recommendations they produced as a result were derived from the idea of the village, that is, the emphasis on harmony:

- Design details and materials should be chosen to be harmonious with neighbouring properties
- New buildings should demonstrate, respect and respond to the character of the local area.
- Housing developments should be of a scale, design and size compatible with the character of the surrounding area.
- All types of road furniture - benches, litter bins, signs etc- should be in keeping with a rural scene, using materials that blend in with their surroundings.
- Will your alterations sit well with the original design and the surrounding area? If the answer is not a clear yes then examine other ways of achieving the functional changes whilst conserving the scene (Colwall VDS 2001: 16, 17, 26).

There are many more statements discouraging the breaking of harmony in the settlement. In the idea of the village, harmony is considered to exist in the form of an organic community, consisting of its residents. Here the idea is projected to its physical contents, or their external appearances to be precise. By emphasising the importance of harmony, the VDS covertly discourages modern designs, which are extremely rarely to be seen in the English countryside. The statement also recommends using reclaimed or similar materials rather than brand-new alternatives. It mentions that Colwall made an agreement with BT not to replace the old red public telephone box with a modern one. By setting these standards, the VDS is also trying to control the time of the place which is believed to fit in with 'the village'. In addition to the sense of harmony, the idea of self-containment is also expressed by emphasising the facilities in the settlement.

Another element of the idea, the boundedness or the boundaries, is also expressed in the Statement. In addition to the explicit emphasis on the importance of the settlement boundaries, the VDS implies their existence in a more subtle way. It presents Colwall as a settlement in the middle of the countryside and describes the surrounding fields, woodlands and hills, which inevitably creates an impression of the enclosedness of the settlement. This impression is visually reinforced by photographs and an illustration. However, the boundaries do not separate Colwall from its surroundings. The porous nature of the boundaries presented in the VDS

mentioned in Chapter 3 presents Colwall as having a close and harmonious relationship with its surroundings. People enjoy the countryside around as a landscape be viewed or for the network of routes to ramble, cycle or drive through. Open spaces and trees and hedges in a garden are interpreted as an equivalent to 'natural elements' in the surroundings, both of which contribute to the creation of a rural atmosphere. The VDS depicts and appreciates the surrounding area predominantly in terms of its amenities and aesthetic qualities. In short, there is continuity and a harmonious relationship between the settlement and its surrounding agricultural area, as regards the visual and amenity-related aspects. However, in terms of the social and economic aspects, the permeable nature of the boundaries ceases to function. Few residents in the settlement area know the farmers and landowners personally, nor do they know much about or are particularly interested in what happens in agricultural fields and private woodlands. Therefore, the highlighted facts in the VDS regarding the surroundings are the Tree Preservation Orders, which protect trees and woodland by registering and monitoring them, the Hedgerow Regulations, which protect hedgerows in the same manner, the AONB, the Special Wildlife Sites, the Site of Special Scientific Interest, and the footpath network. To put it simply, the VDS represents the surrounding area as a reservoir of wildlife, or a nature conservation area, which would enhance residents' lives visually and recreationally.

The Colwall VDS was officially endorsed by Herefordshire Council as its Supplementary Planning Guidance. In other words, their vision of the spatial management of the settlement is formally recognised by its local planning authority as the way to form an ideal place for 'local people'. Although, unlike the adoption status, the endorsement status does not legally bind the authority to follow the guidance in the document when they assess planning applications, it certainly affects their decision since the planning department itself was involved in the production process of the document and the council encourages other parishes to formulate their own VDSs.

The actual effect of the VDS has not yet emerged in Colwall. However, most of the points and concerns demonstrated in the VDS had already been expressed

by the parish council in their assessment of planning applications. Although the parish council does not have the power to make decisions, they can make recommendations to the local planning authority, which, however, does not have any legal obligation to follow the recommendations. The Colwall parish council, which has its own planning and development committee, assesses about 50 planning applications in an average year, half of which concern minor alterations or tree pruning that tend to receive approval recommendations¹³⁵. The remaining applications, most of which are for substantial extension and development, are refused. The most common reason for refusal concerns harmony:

‘out of keeping with the area’

‘out of scale with other properties in the immediate area’

‘the character and density of the development would not be appropriate’

‘incompatible in a residential area within the AONB’

‘the design of the building was not in keeping with the adjacent buildings and the street scene in the area’

‘severely obtrusive and detrimental to the visual amenities of the AONB’

These phrases were repeated over and over in past assessments. The committee is also very aware of the boundaries. Any application for sites outside the settlement boundaries was invariably refused. Elements of time are also strongly expressed. The loss of mature trees caused by development was raised as one of the reasons for rejection. Permission for a barn conversion was rejected because it proposed using non-traditional materials. An extension was approved with the condition that materials matching the neighbouring old buildings would be used and the finish would be similarly in keeping. Some of these recommendations were adopted by the planning authority, others were ignored, but the endorsement of the VDS may make their decision more favourable to the parish council¹³⁶.

In addition to these formal assessments, planning applications can be scrutinised by voluntary organisations and individuals. Planning issues in Colwall are also monitored by local CPRE groups. As I mentioned in the previous section, the

¹³⁵ Many of these minor alterations can be carried out with ‘Permitted Development Rights’, which do not normally require planning permission. However, being in the AONB, most of these minor alterations need planning permission in Colwall. The newly created Conservation Area also makes it necessary to apply for permission for minor alterations.

¹³⁶ The current Labour government is moving towards empowering parish councils. They intend to devolve more power onto the councils especially in the area of planning.

CPRE was the driving force in the creation of the current planning system, and it is still actively, if not aggressively, involved with development control and conservation issues. Each county has its own branch, and below that level small groups are formed by local persons. Although their distribution is quite uneven and their size and influence are varied, it is at this level that day-to-day planning issues are scrutinised. This area has two local CPRE groups in this area; these are in Ledbury and Malvern, both of which have Colwall residents as active members¹³⁷. Both groups have a monthly meeting in which around 10 to 15 members discuss planning issues in the area. If necessary, they carry out site inspections and forward their opinions to the local planning departments, with which they keep in regular contact, and in some cases lobby their case through councillors who sit on the planning committees and build up a campaign through local media. The committee members went on training courses on dealing with planning applications provided by the national office¹³⁸. Through the training courses they learned how to assess planning applications and how to present their cases within the framework of the planning system, which itself has been influenced by the CPRE's idea of the countryside in its protectionist principle. In a sense, these local members of the CPRE play the role of informal but careful monitors of the implementation of planning regulations.

The CPRE groups are not the only people who monitor local planning issues on a voluntary basis. In Colwall, a small number of persons set up a group to monitor any development and alteration, especially on the south side of the settlement. They meet twice a year to exchange information and opinions. Some of them are members of the VDS team. In Dymock, persons who are interested in the Dymock Poets have paid close attention to the buildings and environment related to the poets. The conservation of one of those buildings, Little Iddens, created the opportunity to

¹³⁷ However, the Malvern group deals only with cases in the Malvern Hills District, to which Colwall does not belong. The CPRE Ledbury group, which actually covers Colwall cases, was founded by Marion of the Friends of the Dymock Poets. Colwall resident, Pat, who has been on the parish council for a long time and convened the VDS, and George, who has been one of the prominent members of the Malvern Hills Conservators and the Colwall Village Society, became members.

¹³⁸ These local groups are quite independent from the national organisation which provides information and training programmes. They organise their activities on their own, and they have to raise funds by recruiting members. In this sense, the national organisation and the local groups

gather people together to form the Friends of Dymock Poets. They checked all the planning applications submitted by the builder, and monitored the rebuilding process. Whenever something undesirable came up they immediately started lobbying various organisations, including the local planning authority. They tried very hard to preserve this grade II listed cottage in its original condition. It was the planning system that made it possible for them to intervene in the rebuilding process. Although interior alteration can be restricted in the case of listed buildings, it is the exterior that is subject to strict planning control. Kevin Lynch pointed out the different attitudes to the interior and the exterior:

only the external historical shell need be preserved or reconstructed. It can then shelter current, active uses, and internal physical modifications suitable to those new uses are allowable. 'Outsides' are public, historic, and regulated, while 'insides' are private, fluid, and free (1972: 32).

In the case of a listed building like Little Iddens, the 'publicness' of the building increases dramatically. Even a minor alteration, such as painting walls or changing doors, cannot be carried out without Listed Building Consent, and all the materials are checked. The poets' group exploited this doctrine of exterior preservation and played the role of informal enforcer of the regulations. In addition to Little Iddens, the FDP also keeps an eye on the local, especially visual, environment. They tried to save old roadsigns when the highway authority started to replace them with modern ones, and also tried to remove road-signs installed by the parish council to warn drivers to reduce their speed when driving through children's play areas. When the village hall at Broom's Green was rebuilt, they sent two members to a public meeting to check the design of the new building. Again in Broom's Green, when a local pub was sold to a person who reputedly wanted to convert it into a residential house, a member of the FDP launched a campaign to stop it, arguing that the pub was part of local literary heritage since it must have been visited by the poets.

Perhaps because of their interests, the Dymock group's concern is not so much about the idea of the village as about the rural environment to which the poets were related. They are therefore more sensitive about the time aspect, or the visualised time, of the place whether it appears on the surface of the buildings or in

compete with each other for membership and subscription.

the surrounding agricultural lands. Since the poets were known as keen walkers, the Dymock group, together with the WPPP, also monitors the conditions of footpaths including the trees and hedgerows alongside with them. The row over the hedgerow destruction described in Chapter 2 was a good example of this. This particular hedge had a special historical meaning for the group since it ran between two cottages rented by the Frosts and the Thomases. The poets visited each other through that hedge and Thomas described it in his essay. When the FDP organised a poetry walking tour, they stopped by the hedge and read aloud a passage from the essay. It functioned as an apparatus to create a particular sense of time for the poetry people, while for the farmer it was just one of the agricultural facilities which had nothing to do with history:

I took the hedge out for agricultural reasons, because it is difficult to turn today's tractors in fields of three or four acres ... Some people are making exaggerated claims for this hedge's historical associations. This is an ordinary agricultural hedge of which there are millions of miles in England (*The Daily Telegraph* 31/10/1994).

Although they failed to stop the destruction because it was before the Hedgerow Regulation came into effect, they made the incident public through local and national newspapers and strongly discouraged local farmers from carrying out similar destruction in the area. The chairman of the FDP expressed their desire for intervention in her comment:

The district council must approve the proposals to repair and restore the building (Little Iddens) and the Friends are able to comment on the planning application. But a hundred metres away, a hedgerow of equal importance was destroyed in a few hours (*The Citizen* 26/10/1994).

After the Hedgerow Regulations in 1997, hedgerows over a certain age became the object of planning control; therefore, people can express their concerns through the planning assessment process. Together with mature trees well-established hedgerows generate a particular sense of time and continuity, as do old buildings. Since the establishment of the footpath network, the Dymock countryside has been covered by travel writers from time to time in a weekend walking feature in newspapers. Most of them claimed that its rolling hills, apple orchards and hedged lanes have hardly changed since the time when poets rambled there, and assured readers that they could experience the same landscape they had enjoyed. Together with the Tree Preservation

Order, the Hedgerow Regulation put the mature vegetation in the countryside, which conveys the history, under protection¹³⁹. In Colwall, protection has been carried out in a more systematic way. The Village Society formed a group to survey the condition of hedgerows in the parish. They recorded all the existing hedgerows and compared them with the 1842 tithe map. The same group is planning to survey the condition of the mature trees, including those registered in the TPO, in the parish. The parish council has its own tree warden who actually led the survey, and the warden monitors conditions regularly.

One of the ways to feel the time conveyed by the trees and hedgerows in rural areas is to walk along public footpaths. The public rights of way are regulated by the highway authorities who are currently at county council or unitary authority level. Together with the planning regulations, the highway regulations play an important role in rural space management. They secure the public rights of access to the countryside over private properties. After the watershed 1949 Act and a vigorous campaign to open up the footpaths built up by ramblers in the 1970s and 1980s all over England and Wales, which often involved bitter confrontations with landowners and farmers, the status of the Public Rights of Way (PoW) is now generally established and accepted. I remember that when I chatted with a retired farmer in Colwall and referred to the footpath, he immediately said, 'Oh, the footpath. It's the sacred thing, you see. You've got to keep it. Once a highway, always a highway, they say', in a slightly ironic tone. The PoW covers all of England and Wales regardless of whether the property has public or private status. The land itself may belong to a particular individual or institution, but the surface of the PoW belongs to the state and is regulated by the highway authorities, which have a duty to maintain the surface of the PoW. The occupiers of the land have a duty to keep the PoW free of obstructions, and it is a criminal offence to block the PoW, even temporarily, without permission. However, it has been pointed out that the Highway Authorities are reluctant to show a strong commitment to enforce the regulations, mainly because of

¹³⁹ However, it is a fairly widespread practice that some farmers regularly hit unwanted trees and hedges with agricultural machinery, or damage their roots, which eventually destroys trees and hedges but looks like 'natural' death. In the case of housing development, developers often destroy unwanted trees when the profit they gain by doing so is larger than the fine.

their shortages of resource and staff (Countryside Commission 1993, 1999). Here again, in this climate, voluntary groups and individuals are heavily involved with the system to enforce regulation on rural space management.

In Dymock, the Windcross Public Paths Project (WPPP) was the driving force behind the reinstatement of the long neglected footpaths in the area and the creation of three popular circular routes, which were described in chapter 2. Although its inspiring leader, Simon, recently moved out of the area after being appointed chief executive of the Youth Hostel Association, the members of the WPPP still organise guided walks and monitor the condition of the footpaths. Their Daffodil Walk in March is well established as an annual event in the local calendar and attracts several hundred people of all ages to the area. The monthly walks, which typically attract around 10 people, also serve the purpose of inspecting the condition of the footpaths. Although the old antagonism between ramblers and landowners/farmers has significantly subsided, obstructions do still appear on the footpaths from time to time, such as deliberate covering or destruction of signposts, blocking the paths with barbed wire, locked gates, ploughing up the fields, spraying crops without reinstating or securing the paths, or bulls in the fields. Since one of the members of the WPPP is the footpath officer of the Gloucestershire County Council, information is relayed directly to the highway authority.

The FDP also plays the role of monitor of the footpaths in Dymock since they regularly organise guided poetry walks in the area. One of their favourite anecdotes about the poets is the Old Bott incident: when Frost and Thomas walked in Lord Beauchamp's private estate near Ryton, they were confronted by his old gamekeeper, Bott. Aiming a shotgun at them, Old Bott accused them of trespassing on private land and insulted Frost by calling him 'a damned cottager'. Although, restrained by Thomas they retreated at the time, Frost could not bear the insult, went back to the gamekeeper and had a violent quarrel. The incident involved the local police, and finally Lord Beauchamp himself stepped in and apologised for his gamekeeper's behaviour. The FDP members repeatedly told me this story as an ancient example of the contemporary conflict between ramblers and landowners/farmers. Although there has not been any significant conflict on their

walks, they obviously liken themselves to their literary idols.

In Colwall, the condition of the footpaths is monitored by the parish council mainly through its footpath officer. Colwall has also published footpath maps and a walking guide, produced by a late council clerk who was a walking enthusiast. After his sudden death, the council decided to create a memorial walking route for him, which produced another walking guide leaflet which contained a map, instructions and local information. The leaflet was created in collaboration with the AONB and was entitled 'Discovery Walk'; it is to be serialised to cover the whole parish. All of these maps and guides are readily available in local tourist information offices. These efforts are meant to encourage people to walk the footpaths in the parish. The footpaths in Colwall were until 1997 also monitored by a voluntary organisation, the Malvern Hills District Footpaths Society, which is a local affiliate of the Ramblers' Association. The society, which was founded in 1973 and has over 300 members, has acted as an informal inspector of the condition of the footpaths in the Malvern Hills District. In addition to offering weekly walks for its members and the public and publishing walking routes in the local newspaper, they organise a working party to check the conditions of all footpaths in the district twice a year by actually walking on them. Although Colwall is now outside the district, because some of their members live in the area, the footpaths in Colwall are still of interest to them.

5.4 Middle-class and Rural Gentrification

In this section, I shall focus on the background of those who are actively involved in the activities described in the previous section, and also on the outcome of such activities. I shall introduce the concepts of the 'service class' and the 'gentrification process' that have been discussed as part of British rural studies since the late 1980s (see the first section). I will then examine those concepts in the context of Colwall and Dymock.

5.4.1 The agent of change and the consequences of migration

At a Christmas party held at my friends' house in Malvern, I had a chat with one of the participants while participating in a whisky tasting session. After hearing what I was doing in the Malvern area and my special interest in village life and the in-migrants' activities there, he said he could see what I meant. He told me that he used to live in a rural village in Worcestershire, and then classified its residents into three groups: people who live in large houses outside the settlement; people who move into houses inside the settlement; and people who have always lived in the settlement. The last group, he continued, was made up of 'dinosaurs' who were dying out and doing nothing, anyway. People belonging to the first group, who may be established families or in-migrants, may financially contribute to village activities but generally withdraw deep into their privacy, secure in large houses on their large estates. It is the second group that organises various activities in the settlement and keeps the community going. There was not much communication between the groups.

The picture of the rural community he presented to me in our brief conversation is probably quite accurate and typical of contemporary rural settlements, especially of those located in semi-rural areas. Colwall certainly fits into his description without having to make too many adjustments. However, this general picture of a rural social structure based mainly on the local/in-migrant distinction requires a closer look, especially given the dimension of class distinction.

Ever since the late 1970s the impact of middle-class in-migrants in rural areas, or counter-urbanisation, has been repeatedly discussed in British rural studies (Newby 1979, Cloke 1985, Urry 1995). It is not only in academic discourse that this phenomenon is discussed. It is well-accepted, even in lay knowledge, that a middle-class urban exodus has changed the character of the countryside. The middle-class in-migrants have indeed made a significant impact on many rural communities in various areas; the manner of the local decision-making process and the shape of local organisations have become more formal and the consensus principle or an existing local hierarchy have lost their mighty importance. Furthermore, the allocation of local resources, including employment and housing

stock, has become more competitive. Consumption and recreational patterns became more ostentatious while communication with one's neighbours has become less intense. This process is still ongoing and various articles on this subject appear in newspapers and academic journals from time to time. More often than not, this phenomenon is described in a negative, and sometimes even sarcastic, tone. These in-migrants tend to be depicted either as naive dreamers or arrogant invaders. Whether in journalism or academic study, the phenomenon of middle-class in-migration is often allocated to the now established genre of 'conflict studies'. This is partly because there are indeed conflicts caused by migration but also because it appears to be rather easier to generate articles from that well-accepted angle. However, the changes brought by these in-migrants do not always have to be described in a negative tone or as 'conflicts'. Moreover, the 'conflicts' have not always taken place at any clear-cut boundary between the middle-class in-migrants and the working class locals. To clarify these points, it is necessary to identify more closely who the middle-class in-migrants are and then to examine what they are seeking.

The category of middle-class is rather broad and vague since it may include anyone but those who belong to either end of the social spectrum that is the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. In order to identify this category more precisely and also to specify the agent of change in rural areas, a particular section of the middleclass has been singled out for study by sociologists since the 1980s. The 'service class' is the one which receives the attention of British rural studies.

This concept and the term 'service' class were first invented in an obscure short article written by the Austro-Marxist Karl Renner in 1953¹⁴⁰ and were introduced to Britain by Ralf Dahrendorf in the 1960s (Renner 1978, Dahrendorf 1969). Renner examined the rapid increase of salaried employees as opposed to waged labour, and concluded that these employees took over and exercised the

¹⁴⁰ Austro-Marxism is a term coined by the American socialist Louis Boudin to describe the thinking of a group of young Marxists working in and around Vienna in the early 20th century (Bottomore and Goode 1978). The rapid expansion of the middleclass has attracted the attention of Marxist thinkers since it was contradictory to Marx's prediction of the polarisation of society into the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. The phenomenon was first studied in Weimar Germany and Rennie indirectly inherited this tradition and focused particularly on people in managerial posts (Sarre 1989: 102-5).

function and the influence of capitalists in exchange for a salary and a secure position. He also included bureaucrats of the ever-expanding state apparatus. Whether they are in the private or public sectors, their main function is to administer and to enforce law/regulation and order. He then claimed that these people in managerial and administrative positions together with professionals and others, such as intellectuals, military officers and priests, formed a new class; he named it the 'service class' since they generally served the capitalist or state organisations (Renner *do.*). After being introduced by Dahrendorf with his own emphasis on the power exercised by the employees as proxy for the capitalists, the notion was mothballed for a decade. It was then rediscovered and developed by several sociologists during the 1980s in order to analyse the ever increasing influence of the middle-class in political, economic and cultural spheres (eg Gould 1980, Goldthorp 1982, Scott and Urry 1987).

However, it was Nigel Thrift who almost single-handedly connected this concept of the service class to the ongoing reconstruction in rural areas (Thrift 1987, 1989, Cloke and Thrift 1990, Cloke, Philips and Thrift 1995). He argued that after experiencing rapid expansion in the 1960s and 1970s, the British service class started to form its own culture, or its own sense of values, in the 1980s. According to Thrift, the service class is distinguished especially by their consumption-based lifestyle, which is interpreted as the exchange of economic capital with symbolic/cultural capital; by purchasing particular commodities they form and maintain their group identity. Such commodities include property and holidays in particular areas, vehicles and clothing in particular taste, and private education for their offspring. They are particularly interested in traditional and environmental issues, which strongly direct their consumption patterns in the forms of heritage and the countryside. Thrift claimed that as a newly formed social group, the service class appropriated these two elements of heritage and the countryside as cultural symbols in order to define themselves. The elements also serve the purpose of distinguishing the service class from other groups, and especially from the working class, since these elements were traditionally associated with the upper class. Thrift interpreted the service class's commitment to heritage and the countryside as 'a short-cut to legitimacy' (1989: 34).

The almost irresistible appeal and influence of the upper class, which is a

synonym for the landed class, and its culture and values in Britain, on the rising industrialists in the 19th and 20th centuries was discussed by Wiener (1981). Thrift's thesis of the service class's appropriation of upper-class culture is almost a repetition of the process presented by Wiener, on a mass scale. However, while Wiener pictured the process as the upper class establishment's assimilation of the rising industrial capitalists to maintain their hegemony, Thrift regarded the process as the service class's exploitation of the readily available cultural elements in order to become established. He demonstrated their strong interest through the rapid increase of the membership of countryside and heritage organisations, such as the National Trust and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, and the launching or revival of a dozen traditionalist magazines in the 1980s. Both these developments were supported by the rise of the service class (1989: 26-8). Because of the value placed on the two elements and the support for them expressed through consumption, the market quickly adopted these elements in order to sell products; there are a wide range of products from clothing to furniture whose basic design concepts are 'traditional' and 'country'.

(Geography of service class)

Thrift pointed out that the service class had its own geography (1989: 22). Not surprisingly it is in the countryside that they tend to choose to live, or more specifically the countryside of the south of England where they can commute to London (see Savage and Fielding 1989). The south, having the Home Counties at its core, extends to East Anglia in the east and to Dorset and Somerset in the west. The formation of this service-class geography was the outcome of the fusion of economic and cultural factors. It is economic since the bulk of the demand for service class jobs (that is professional, managerial and administrative jobs) is generated in the London area. It is, however, also a cultural phenomenon since the countryside of the south, especially its landscape, has long been given an almost mythical status as the 'quintessential' England which is the ideal place in which to live¹⁴¹.

¹⁴¹ In his paper focused on this southern dominance in the English rural image, historian Alun Howkins, after giving examples of the usage of rural images in advertisements, pointed out:

(Rural gentrification i: alteration)

In parallel with the expansion of the service class since the 1970s, the countryside of the south has experienced a large number of in-migrants dominated by the service class, which has caused drastic changes in its social structure. The changes caused by this in-migration are often described as 'rural gentrification' (Little 1987, Phillips 1993). The concept and the term 'gentrification' were originally referred to in urban studies, and were coined by Glass (1963) to describe and analyse the on-going process of middle-class people 'invading' traditionally working-class inner city areas, which was a counter movement to the post-war suburbanisation and inner-city decline (Hamnett 1984, 1991, Phillips 1993). The gentrification, typically started by people who sought cheaper properties, results in a total or partial displacement of the original residents. The process also includes physical alterations to the area. The gentrifiers renovate, or 'upgrade', the buildings in the area to satisfy their tastes.

Its rural counterpart, rural gentrification, also involves the physical renovation of the buildings and the environment¹⁴². Thrift called the result 'manicured countryside', which obviously implies the superficiality of the alterations which have taken place with the in-migration of the service class. From his point of view, and that of many other professional and lay social commentators, the environment, or the landscape, created by the in-migration of the service class is 'superficial' since it is mainly based on their preconceived rural image circulating in the representational space. The gentrification can be implemented by the service class in-migrants themselves, but more often than not the alteration has already been carried out through market forces in order to lure the in-migrants to the area. The market forces involve both professional and amateur gentrifiers. Professional

Thatching, for instance, especially straw thatching, is regionally specific, as are village greens and hedgerows. These images, rural and southern, are, by definition, outside the direct daily experience of the vast majority of Britain's population, yet they occur again and again ... Purity, decency, goodness, honesty, even 'reality' itself are closely identified with the rural south (1986: 62-3)

The topic was also discussed in (Howkins *ibid*: 72, Wiener 1981: 41-2, 52-64, 72-80, Cosgrove 1993: 29).

¹⁴² The early impact of middle-class migration into the Home Counties was studied in (Pahl 1965).

gentrifiers, such as developers, builders, architects, landscape architects, landowners who may or may not be local, estate agents and retailers, promote gentrification for profit. In addition to these commercial operators, there are marginal gentrifiers (Rose 1984) who buy cheap properties and renovate them either by employing builders or by using their own DIY skills and labour for the profit they expect to make when they put the renovated properties on the market (Phillips 1993: 126-7). Whether professional or amateur, these gentrifiers do not carry out alterations according to their own tastes but rather in order to make a profit by supplying a certain type of property in a certain location for those who have the desire to own such properties and are prepared to, and can afford to, pay the price. Due to the strict planning control effective in rural areas, the existing conventional housing stock is not enough to meet the demand, which leads to the expansion of the gentrification to the buildings that were not originally built for residential purposes. Agricultural barns, stables, decommissioned churches and chapels, wind and water mills hop kilns, cider mills, and so on have been converted into residential buildings. The conversion is so commonplace that most of the planning authorities issue supplementary planning guidance for this purpose (eg Herefordshire Council 2002b).

(Rural gentrification ii: preservation)

Rural gentrification does not only entail the alteration of the character of the buildings and their environment. It also entails putting a stop to certain alterations in the area which might 'damage' the character of a place. These two aspects of gentrification do not contradict each other. They are two wings of the same force to create an ideal place for a certain group of people. However, the alteration version of gentrification tends to be more actively pursued by market forces in terms of its scale. In other words, the service class comprised of, essential, though rather passive, consumers who purchase what they are offered by the market. In other forms of gentrification, they play a more active role. It has already been pointed out that the service class forms the core membership of both the national and local conservation and amenity organisations. Buller and Lowe claimed that rural amenity and conservation issues were the major media for middle-class people in the countryside

to express their political demands (1982: 21). In their study of the Suffolk Preservation Society (SPS), which was founded as a CPRE local branch in 1929, they found that most committee members of this influential organisation were long-standing professional in-migrants. They were teachers, planners, surveyors, architects, doctors and lawyers, whose main interest was to preserve the aesthetic environment of Suffolk. They lobbied hard through the planning system to protect the landscape and the architectural and historical aspects of their locality from development. The SPS is probably quite typical in its character and activities as an amenity and conservation organisation, the type of organisation which can be found in every corner of England. These organisations function as an interest group of the service class and as the driving force behind the gentrification process. While gentrification as 'alteration' tends to be confined to private properties, gentrification as preservation goes well beyond such boundaries and includes the whole area; the settlement they live in and its surrounding environment. Their sometimes aggressive campaign to stop developments causes a scarcity of housing resources and employment opportunities mainly for the local working-class population, while their strict monitoring to impose a higher quality on development schemes aggravates the situation since it raises the cost and the final price. As a result, the gentrification process displaces the working-class population from the area and creates a largely middle-class settlement (Buller and Lowe 1982: 36-39, Little 1987: 190, 194-7).

5.4.2. People at work on the ground

Both concepts of the 'service class' and 'gentrification' are quite helpful to understand what is happening in Colwall and Dymock which is no doubt part of a much larger restructuring of rural England. However, these general concepts need several adjustments to present clear pictures of Colwall and Dymock.

(Geography and character of in-migrants)

First of all, both Colwall and Dymock, or Herefordshire and this part of Gloucestershire, do not belong to the south. This point is not just a fastidious geographical classification but actually makes a difference to the character of the

persons who migrated into the area. Lying outside the south, this area is not within commuting distance to London¹⁴³, which makes a significant difference in property prices. The distance to London and the property prices attract a particular section of the service class. The in-migrants need local employment or no employment at all. There are local employment opportunities here, notably local governments, a government research agency which was recently privatised, and both independent and state schools. In addition, there are various entrepreneurs and consultants who work from home. However, the number of people belonging to this latter group is still relatively small, and there are not so many service-class jobs available in the area. Therefore, the service-class in-migrants in this area tend to be either public-sector workers or persons who do not need regular employment, including the retired.

As I mentioned in previous chapters the average age of the population in the area is higher than the national average, and there are quite a few in-migrants who moved in there spend their lives after retirement. This tendency is quite pronounced in Colwall because of the renowned scenic beauty of the area and easy access to various amenities and facilities. No comprehensive survey has been carried out on the topic, but my random household survey (of 46 households) picked up 11 such cases, of which three came from Birmingham and five from the south-east, all of whom had service-class jobs. Whenever I asked Colwall residents about the character of the community, they unfailingly mentioned the existence of such persons. In addition to those who moved in after their retirement, my survey picked up a further eight cases of people who had moved from the south-east for various reasons. In many cases, the price of property is one of the main reasons for them choosing this area. One of the persons who moved in the 1980s from London told me that he could buy twice as large a house for half the price he sold his house for in London. A nearby town, Ledbury, had a flood of in-migrants from the south-east during the 1980s housing boom, which drastically changed the character of the locality from a declining, shabby, agricultural market town to a thriving town with various cafes,

¹⁴³ It is true that both places are within commutable distance to Birmingham and several people actually do this. However, their numbers are rather small. This is perhaps because in the West Midlands the service class can afford similar properties around Birmingham before they come down to this southern area.

delicatessens and art galleries¹⁴⁴. Although, as I mentioned in the previous section, the service class is strongly associated with the south, especially the south-east, because of the rocketing property prices there, the less well-off part of the service class tends to move away from the region later in their lives¹⁴⁵. This part of the West Midlands plays the role of the receiving region of those who have spilled out of the south, which inevitably facilitates geriatrification.

However, my survey picked up many more cases of people who moved into the area for employment. The decision to choose a particular place was made for a combination of reasons, such as property prices, education opportunities and a safe environment for children, and pursuing the rural idyll. In Colwall, 24 out of 46 cases, and in Dymock, 14 out of 39 cases gave employment as the main reason for their migration. The housing needs survey in Colwall carried out by Herefordshire council also supports this tendency: 115 out of 532 cases. Most of these in-migrants had service-class jobs, especially in the public sector. In Dymock's case, their occupations include company managers, civil servants, a business consultant, an RAF officer, a secondary school headmaster and a DERA scientist; five out of 14 of these jobs are in the public sector. In Colwall's case, there is a much stronger tendency of public-sector employment. Ten out of 24 cases came there to take public-sector jobs which were either at the DERA or local schools¹⁴⁶. In addition there were six quasi-public-sector jobs of five public school teachers and a GP. In other words, local employment opportunities contributed towards the selection of population in this area. The public-sector service class has a strong presence in both areas¹⁴⁷. Most of those who moved into the area for employment remain in the area,

¹⁴⁴ A journalist who lived near the town and witnessed the transformation wrote:

The native population never cared that much for the place, the farming community treated its towns very much the way it treated its working dogs - and you need to have lived in the country to know what that means. It is the new money, not the old, that is sprucing the place up. Ledbury and Newent are moving upmarket - now is the good time before the last of the old ways of life disappears (*The Independent* 20/8/1988).

¹⁴⁵ Savage and Fielding called the south-east 'the escalator region' since aspiring young people move into the region for the abundant service-class employment opportunities but tend to move out later into life for a more desirable environment in which they can afford to buy property (1989).

¹⁴⁶ It can be problematic to place teachers and researchers in the service class. However, they are professionals, and the modern educational and research institutes require a considerable amount of time to be spent on administrative work, especially for those who are in senior positions. Therefore, I am counting them as members of the service class.

¹⁴⁷ In both places, there are more service class in-migrants moving in because of properties. However,

or express their desire to do so, after retirement.

(Sub-division of service class i: private and public sectors)

This difference among the service class has already been pointed out (Cloke and Thrift 1987, 1990, Cloke, Phillips and Thrift 1995). Although persons in professional and managerial jobs form a group through relations of production (that is non-productive labour, dominance in bureaucratic organisations and the labour market) (Cloke and Thrift 1990: 174), it is claimed that there are differences in attitudes between those who work in the public sector as administrators or professionals, such as teachers, and those who work in the private sector as company managers or professionals, such as lawyers and accountants. It is pointed out that people belonging to the latter group have a more individualist ideology, and they are much wealthier than their counterparts in the public sector (op.cit: 174). Another inner boundary within the service class is drawn along age groups. Older service-class persons tend to occupy a preferable rural location mainly because of their accumulated wealth. Because of the strict planning control applied in rural areas, which limits the amount of housing stock, in practice they exclude younger groups are excluded from the area. (op. cit: 175).

(Sub-division of service class ii: four types)

Independent from these public/private-sector and age differences, Cloke, Phillip and Thrift found, from their studies of Gower, the Cotswolds and rural Berkshire, that there were four groups among the middleclass in rural areas. They named those groups 1) a local gentry, 2) village regulators, 3) move-in-and-join-in, and 4) move-in-for-self-and-show (1995: 236-38). The last three groups are relevant for our purpose here to understand the service-class in-migrants. 'Village regulators' are those who are keen to keep order in the place by implementing rules and regulations. They regard themselves as 'the protectors of village space'. 'Move-in-and-join-in' are those who play active roles in various societies and clubs. They place a high value on the idea of community. 'Move-in-for-self-and-show' are

these people tend to be high-earning professionals such as dentists, lawyers, accountants and private

those who have an 'obsessive' interest in their properties. They value their quality of life more than anything else. They keep their houses and gardens in impeccable condition but are not interested in community life so much.

(Gentrification as a group act: bourgeoisification)

The members of these sub-divisions within the service class in-migrants have different attitudes toward the localities where they live. However, as a group, they are part of the gentrification of the area since, because of the limited housing stock, their migration itself contributes to the replacement of the previous population. Their enthusiasm for consumption bourgeoisifies the area they move into. In our fields, the influx of this sector of the population changed the character of the nearby towns of Malvern and Ledbury where they do their everyday shopping. Cafes and art shops opened in Ledbury, which also has an upmarket delicatessen selling Italian and even Japanese food. Waitrose, the symbol of the English middle-class, opened a branch in Malvern. It is also true that the houses and gardens belonging to these people are generally kept in very good, or sometimes 'too good', condition. They make a rather sharp contrast to properties belonging to established people. The latter, regardless of their owners' class and wealth, are weathered and blend well into the surroundings in a low-key way; the former, regardless of age, tend to stand out for their ornamental assertiveness and peculiar tidiness, which gives the impression that each property is an independent unit.

(Objects of gentrification and the sub-division of service class)

However, although this gentrification can be described as a group act of the in-migrated service class for the aesthetic construction and preservation of their locality, it is not a simple, single act, but has a slight but certain difference in the attitudes within it, along the lines of the sub-divisions mentioned above. While most of the persons who belong to this group strongly value and guard their privacy, the tendency is stronger among those who have/had private-sector employment and the younger members of the group. Their attention tends to be concentrated within the

company managers.

boundaries of their own properties. Well-off professionals tend also to be members of this group. In the Cloke, Phillips and Thrift classification, they fall into the 'move-in-for-self-and-show' category. The tendency increases in proportion to the size of the property and its distance from the main settlement. The other upper-middle-class persons, such as entrepreneurs, share this tendency. When they say 'I love this place', 'this place' tends to be confined to their own property. Once an entrepreneur in his country house in an impeccably landscaped garden told me that he would be happier if the surrounding countryside was in fact all the sea and there were no one around his property. Except for occasional communication with neighbouring farmers and landowners, he and his family have little connection with other locals. He sends his child to an independent school and his social network is not based around this locality. In his mind his property is almost totally detached from its surroundings both physically and socially. His case may be at the extreme end of the spectrum but it represents the general mindset of this group very well. They are unlikely to get actively involved with local activities. The only exception probably occurs when they oppose development plans which directly affect the conditions of their properties.

Their counterparts in the public sector, on the other hand, show rather different attitudes to the locality. They, especially the senior members of the group, are more likely to get involved with various local activities, often playing the leading roles in them. They tend to live within the settlement or in smaller cottages outside without much land attached. They constitute active members of the 'village regulators' and the 'move-in-and-join-in' groups in the Cloke, Phillips and Thrift classification. Although persons belonging to these two groups often overlap in practice, there is a slight difference in their orientations. While the 'village regulators' are more concerned with the maintenance of the physical environment, which includes both buildings and the surrounding countryside, the 'move-in-and-join-ins' cherish the idea of community. The activities of both groups fall within the framework of the idea of the village but with a stress on different points.

(The idea of community)

The latter group is more interested in the people who live in a particular geographical area rather than its physical condition. They found or join various societies and clubs and organise social events. One of my friends, who lives in a parish near Colwall and helps run the village hall there, expressed it very clearly in our conversation¹⁴⁸:

K: Then, what sort of connotation does the word 'country' or 'countryside' have both in general and for you personally?

D: ... an image of community and knowing your neighbour. I think that's what it is. So, it's less to do with landscape.

K: Is that both in general and for you?

D: I think you find a lot of images of the country do have this ideal community. People standing at a gate, talking to each other, which is not something you can find in urban Britain as it's portrayed. And that is my personal image of the countryside, and also it's a general image.

K: Village?

D: Yes, this sort of village atmosphere. uh.... Whereas the actual greenery doesn't really make much difference, because you could be in a large country house park in the middle of nowhere, or you could be in the urban park in the middle of Birmingham.

He does not only value this image of the community but actively tries to realise it by organising various activities at the hall. When I asked him why he was so keen on organising events, he replied:

I think the community is built by people working together, and in the past when there was a farming community everybody would go and help a particular farmer get his harvest in, but it doesn't happen any more. So, you have to provide something for people to work together for. The village hall particularly as an example and the church are examples of being able to form the community around doing something. This has a spin off for it. I mean I am always ... I suppose ... making use of people who ... If I want to go to London, somebody drives down to London everyday here, and I would be able to take them, so I don't have to take the train there. It's that sort of sense of belonging to the community and using people's skills that may be actually practised outside of the community ... bring them back into this community ... so ... I think it gives sense of security having the community where everybody knows everybody else. Most people know everybody's parents, children, what cars to drive ... that sort of thing. This is a fairly stable community here. And it's that sense of security I think is what I'm talking about, that's why I'm concerned about the community.

I pressed him if what he cherished could be a kind of luxury in life:

I think in some way it is a luxury, but it does have practical implications, for instance Mathon actually has very little in the way of robbery it's because I know exactly what the people nextdoor are doing, I know all their relations, I know all the cars they have. I can tell if something is going wrong, and they know the same about us ... You're asking me if it's luxury, ur... in the sense that the luxury gives you a feeling of cosiness ... You can't walk somewhere but somebody says 'Come and

¹⁴⁸ The topic of the conversation was the countryside; he is not an urban in-migrant. Nor had he a service-class job at the time of the interview. He is now a civil servant.

have a cup of tea'. That's luxury.

Perhaps it is these elements of security and cosiness on top of the idea of the village that moves some in-migrants to join in community activities. In the case of Colwall, which is more than seven times larger than Mathon in terms of its population, these activities are organised in the form of various thriving societies and clubs. So, when somebody mentions 'a community' in Colwall, it refers not so much to the whole population living in the area as to a group of persons sharing same interest in the area. Therefore, there are various 'communities' in Colwall, which have been formed on the basis of geographical confinement but are quite selective of their members which assures the 'cosiness'. Since these communities are not formed for survival, to join in or not is also a matter of choice. In any case, the persons who actually lead these communities are highly efficient and experienced in running and administering such organisations and events. In many cases they have acquired the skills and knowledge through their working lives. This is a distinctive characteristic of the service class. They work in or with an organisation and they know how to run it. In addition to organisational or administrative skills, they have their own expert knowledge and skills and various connections. They, especially those who are retired, are ready and eager to apply their knowledge and skills to the community to which they belong. In other words, joining the community is a good opportunity for them to exercise their own skills, apply their knowledge and make themselves 'useful'.

Although the main effects of rural gentrification are the replacement of the local population with members of the in-coming service class and the alteration/preservation of the physical environment caused by this replacement, this revitalisation of the idea of community is also an aspect of the gentrification process. Part of the service class values 'a sense of community' (Little 1987: 189). They make an effort to create this sense of community in the rural localities to which they have migrated. These communities were perhaps originally inspired by the image of a traditional 'organic' community of people linked by locality and necessity. However, the 'communities' actually created there tend to be groups of selected persons who share the same interest. In other words, gentrification also naturally changes the characteristic of the communities in post-productionist rural areas thanks to the

efforts of the 'move-in-and-join-ins',¹⁴⁹.

(Regulation as a means to realise the ideal)

The other group is the 'village regulators'. According to Cloke, Phillips and Thrift, the 'village regulators' are those who are keen to monitor that the regulations are being properly implemented. They are particularly interested in the physical conditions of the area, which are controlled by planning regulations (op. cit: 236). However, this label of 'regulator' can be misleading since it sounds as if their main interest is to implement the regulations itself. Of all the regulations applied to a rural area, those that most frequently and directly affect people's lives and therefore attract much attention are planning regulations. 'Regulators' closely monitor local planning issues, not because there are regulations to follow but because the planning regulations happen to be in keeping with their desire to create or maintain the physical order of the place. British planning regulations in rural area are characterised by their preservationist principles, which is exactly what the regulators want to achieve.

Because of the housing development plan and recent unpopular planning decisions made by the local planning authorities, my fieldwork in Colwall coincided with a very active period for the 'village regulators'. The Village Society was founded partly because there was a strong demand for strict monitoring of planning issues. Not all, but most of the persons who were involved with the Society's planning-related activities belonged to the service class in the public sector. The founding chairman was a recently retired DERA scientist originally from the south. She felt that Colwall lacked a sense of community and she also felt strongly about the inappropriate handling of a particular development. No sooner had the Society been launched than a sub-group devoted to planning issues and charged with producing the village design statement was formed. The leader of the sub-group, Pat, is a lab

¹⁴⁹ This process, of course, varies according to the size of the population and the proportion of in-migrants. Some have a number of communities in the same locality, others have only a couple. However, the majority of them are maintained by the conscious efforts of the in-migrants, who are more often than not members of the service class. Their main function is to provide socialising opportunities for those who share the same interests or who sympathise with the idea of local community.

technician working in a public school, and is originally from a nearby village. She has sat on the parish council for more than a decade and in that capacity became leader of the team. Edward is a retired civil engineer but previously worked for an association of civil engineers based at a university. Henry is another retired DERA scientist. Both of them moved from the Home Counties. Nancy's late husband worked for the Forestry Commission, and she has been deeply involved with the church and village hall management. Sam is a retired planning officer. With the exception of Sam, who lives in a flat in a converted old school, all of them live within the settlement. As a group they presented their ideal place in the form of the VDS and put pressure on the local planning authority to tighten up planning control.

In Dymock the 'village regulators' had particular concerns about heritage. They wanted to keep the local literary associations of the past, and realised that desire through the planning system. Here again most of the persons actively involved with planning issues belonged to the service class in the public sector at one time in their lives. Caroline was an art teacher at the local secondary school until a serious car accident forced her to retire. Marion is an Oxford educated journalist who had worked for the Ramblers' Association as a press officer. Ruth was a senior librarian at the county record office. In addition to them, there was a group of persons who were dedicated to the reinstatement of the public footpath network in Dymock. The advocator of the project, Simon, was a policy director in the Countryside Commission. Of 17 active members, at least 10 were civil servants in central and local governments, teachers and a head teacher. In this case, they relied on the highway regulations which had been there long before them but had not been enforced. They dusted off the regulations and patiently and gently enforced them. Most of them were keen walkers and they wanted to make it possible to walk in the surrounding countryside, which was a new environment for most of them. Here again, these persons enforced the regulations not because there were regulations to keep but because the regulations were useful to satisfy their own desires.

We have observed that gentrification has taken place both in Colwall and Dymock. However, the agent of change, the service class, is not a homogenous

cohesive group. Rather it has several sub-groups within it and those sub-groups have their own ways of transforming their rural space according to their own needs. The gentrification process is the outcome of all those various activities: The 'move-in-for-self-and-show' group, which consists mostly of private-sector managers and high-earning professionals, has a strong preoccupation with their own property and transform it into their ideal form of rural dwelling. The 'move-in-and-join-in' group, which is often led by the public-sector service class, tries to create a community. The 'village regulators', who mostly consist of the public-sector service class, concern themselves with the physical shape of the locality as a whole, including buildings, settlements and the surrounding countryside, and try to control them by relying on the regulations.

In other words, rural gentrification is not a single process but rather a contingent outcome of several different processes pursued by different groups of in-migrants, each with its own agenda to realise. These agendas can contradict each other. What these persons share, however, is the will to transform the space according to their own tastes. In short, each part of gentrification is quite a conscious process. These efforts have collectively transformed the way in which the physical shape of the rural space is managed, a process that is not based on the necessities of production that used to govern the space. Space management under the service-class initiative is based on the image or ideal of rurality. Although the details to which they pay attention are different, they share the same general view of the rural image. Furthermore, as a group, they do not only share and cherish the image, but actively try to realise it in their particular rural space.

The members of the service class are the least geographically restricted persons in the society. They are characterised by their high geographical mobility (Thrift 1987: 242). There are few definite reasons for them to stay in a particular location. Most of the service-class persons I met in Colwall and Dymock had moved around quite a lot in their lifetime, either as a personal choice or as the result of job transfers. In other words, they are relatively free from the concept of place in terms of necessities and attachment. Yet, as we have seen, once they chose a place in which to settle, they then started to build a personal relationship with the space, or to

personalise the space by inscribing their tastes onto it. In other words, the gentrification process in rural area is not a simple phenomenon of the replacement of the local population and the alteration of its appearance, but rather the imposing of an idea. The service class's wealth or knowledge enables them to do this. They tend to invest heavily in the locality, both emotionally and financially, and in doing so they create a spatial meaning there and develop a personal attachment to the place. The boundaries of their 'place' vary; it may be one's own property, a settlement or further beyond.

5.5 Idea of Property and Desire for Control

5.5.1. The countryside as a managed space

Since the 18th century, rural England and life there have been depicted as a mirror image of towns and cities. Those urban spaces were supposed to be managed by the logic of efficiency imposed by industries. While the overcrowded population in urban areas do not have much room to control the space they are in, country folk are left alone and enjoy their freedom in rural areas. Contrary to this generally accepted image of the countryside as a place of freedom, rural areas in England are not, in actual fact, free from restrictions. Rural England has long been subject to relatively strict management. It is a space strictly controlled and monitored by various organisations, from the state to obscure local groups.

Macnaghten and Urry, in their study of the contemporary British concept of nature, pointed out that the countryside in Britain, especially that in the south of England, has been a carefully managed and crafted space (1998: 174-82). They state:

The southern English landscapes have been produced as distinct cultivated spaces through a particularly intense and consistent integration of specific spatial practices, representational spaces and spaces of representation ... (ibid: 181).

They also concluded, after studying the way the countryside was represented in four policy documents produced by a government department and quangos, that people's behaviour in the countryside is carefully monitored and guided, so that it takes particular forms. The rural space is arranged to encourage particular activities and to

restrict others. In these documents, the countryside is presented as the 'environment', which is more or less a synonym of 'landscape' in practice, and therefore the desirable activity there is the quiet and aesthetic appreciation of the view. Noisy obtrusive activities are generally discouraged, and nothing is allowed to disturb that aesthetic beauty. People's movement is monitored and managed by carefully arranged signposts or by the absence of such signposts. They are allowed or encouraged to visit some parts but excluded from others (do: 185-92). Although Macnaghten and Urry focused on visitor management in the context of rural tourism, these principles equally apply to residents of rural areas. This reality of the rural area is in stark contrast to the general perception of 'being out in the country', where people expect to be released from all the constrictions of modern life.

It is not just the behaviour of people that is monitored and restricted in rural areas. As we have seen, the contemporary English countryside has been strictly controlled by various regulations. One can purchase and possess land and buildings as private properties. However, since most development rights were nationalised in 1947, except for minor alterations to non-listed buildings one cannot do anything without submitting detailed plans and obtaining permission from the authorities. If they are listed, landowners cannot even prune trees on their own land. On top of this basic restriction, each local authority produces a management plan of its jurisdiction, which determines how the space is developed or protected within that jurisdiction. In some areas, other organisations such as National Parks and the AONB produce their own management plans. Although the actual production and day-to-day management are conducted at a local level, all these regulations and plans follow the principles set by central government, which reserves the right to make the final decision if something goes wrong. In other words, rural England is firmly incorporated into the state's spatial management system.

In addition to these planning restrictions, the highway regulations put further restrictions on private and public properties in the countryside. It is quite rare to have a sizeable property in the country with exclusive access to it. In the case of public rights of way, which run through the countryside like the mesh of a net, the public usually retains the right of access. These access rights are protected by the highway

regulations which are enforced by the highway authority attached to local government.

These restrictions are enforced by the state bureaucratic machine. The machine consists of central government as the ultimate authority and local governments as line managers of the system. The administration of the space management system is monitored by various organisations, which include parish councils¹⁵⁰, voluntary organisations and local ad hoc groups. In other words, spatial practices in rural areas are restricted and monitored by many layers of organisations.

5.5.2. Public sector service class

At a local level spatial practices and the space management system which controls the practices are monitored by various voluntary organisations. As I mentioned in the previous section, the members of these local voluntary organisations are classified as 'village regulators' who are especially concerned with the proper implementation of the regulations applied to their own environment. The core members of the 'village regulators' group are often service-class in-migrants who work/worked in the public sector. There is a strong and significant correlation between rural space management and the public-sector, service-class in-migrants.

The special relationship between the service class and the countryside has already been pointed out. Regardless of the sectors in which they work, members of the service class tend to have a special interest in the rural area and often actually migrate to the countryside. However, particular trends are evident in their choice of which part of the countryside they want to settle down in. While the managers in the private sector and some professionals prefer to buy a house with land outside a settlement, the public-sector workers often settle down within a settlement. There is an obvious disparity in their wealth, which no doubt affects the decision. However, their attitudes after settling down show that there is another factor here. They act more like the 'village regulators' or the 'move-in-and-join-ins' while their

¹⁵⁰ Although the parish councils are usually referred to as the bottom tier of the state bureaucratic machine, in reality their character is more like well-established local voluntary organisations since their main function is not to enforce decisions made by the machine but to inform the machine of local demands and interests. Councillors are unpaid local people selected by often nominal 'election' and co-optation.

counterparts tend to become part of the 'move-in-for-self-and-show' group. In their study of the British middle-class, Savage et. al. pointed out that administrative government workers showed a distinct involvement in civil society compared with other members of the middle-class (1992: 110). In contrast, their counterparts showed more interest in their family and privacy. Although both groups share an admiration for rural life, or the rural idyll, the actual content of this ideal is not always the same.

The notion of rurality held by the public-sector service class strongly emphasises the idea of community that includes both people and the settlement, which is the definition of the village we focused on at the beginning of this chapter. This idea of the village is deeply embedded in the rural space management system. In a sense, it is quite natural for the public-sector, service-class in-migrants to take a leading role in monitoring the implementation of the system since it is based on their own desire. For the 'village regulators' in particular, there seems to be another reason for their attraction to this role, that is their own experience of public bureaucracy. Lowe and Goyder mentioned in their study of local amenity groups that a high percentage of professionals in those groups were able to "speak the same language" as the planning department, to criticise official policies in an informed manner, and to handle detailed technical arguments' (1983: 91). Lowe and Goyder refer especially to planners and architects here, but their argument is also true of the public-sector service class, since they know how the system works and the proper way to present their case, which involves tedious negotiations and handling complicated documents. In other words, it is an environment in which they can use their knowledge, skill and experience with confidence.

Perhaps it is not just a coincidence that two of the successful projects I described in the previous chapters, namely the WPPP's footpath reinstatement project in Dymock and the VDS in Colwall, did not originate locally but instead were initiated by the Countryside Commission. Most of the persons who were actively involved with the projects belonged to the public-sector service class. Both projects were a quango's attempt to involve the local population in order to enforce the regulations more smoothly. In other words, those who joined the projects realised

their own desire to control the environment by being a part of the state space-control system.

5.5.3. Desire for control and a sense of ownership

It can be claimed that an attachment to a particular locality comes with a kind of sense of ownership of that locality. I say 'a kind of', which means 'ownership' here does not have to mean legal property rights over the land. I argue that a sense of ownership can be engendered from one's capacity to influence, or to exercise power, over the property. In other words, if one possesses or shares control of the property, then one may have a sense of ownership of it.

Reversing that logic, it can also be claimed that an attachment to a particular place engenders a desire to control over it. What I have seen in Dymock and Colwall might be explained by this logic. I have already shown the special relationship between the service class and the countryside. Persons belonging to this class are known to have a strong interest in the countryside, which is believed to be nurtured by the discourse of rurality, or rural idyll, that has been developed in various representational spaces since the 19th century. The discourse has succeeded in making the countryside or a particular part of the countryside at least, the most desirable place to have a residence, the location of desire it becomes. Given the cost of obtaining a property in the country and maintaining it above a certain standard, it has become a symbol of social success to live in the countryside. It is this combination of symbolic values that attracts the newly formed rising social group to appropriate this place. It is an achievable dream for them to live in the countryside. However, as I pointed out before, there is a tendency to select a location in the countryside according to one's background. The private sector managers and some professionals choose an estate-type property, or something close to it, which forms a world of its own. The public sector related members tend to choose a cottage in a settlement. In other words, they tend to choose to live in a village. Their choices are conditioned partly by the difference in their personal wealth but also by the ideal way of life they project onto the countryside. The latter group prefer to live in a community which symbolises the idea of the village.

For those who choose to live in an estate property in the countryside or for those whose ideal type of dwelling falls into that category, their desire for control is concentrated on their own property. They spend their personal time, energy and fortune 'improving' their property according to their taste, thus moving forward the rural gentrification process. For those who choose to live in a rural community, on the other hand, the location of the community, which is a village, becomes the object of their desire for control. Just as the former group alter their property according to their image, the latter group form the village according to their image, which is the idea of the village I have described. This idea of the village is also deeply embedded within the state space management system; thus, persons belonging to the latter group tend to take a voluntary role in regulating the system. Moreover, they have the experience, knowledge and skills to deal with the system, and they can mobilise people to form a movement to achieve their ends.

However, the village is not the only object of their desire for control. As the VDS demonstrates, the village is not perceived as merely a settlement that exists in a vacuum but is rather inseparably connected to its surrounding countryside. Although the boundaries are emphasised in the idea of the village, they are conceived as permeable. The relationship between the settlement and the surrounding land used to be closer and more complicated in terms of socio-economic activities. However, it has been reduced to a simple or single meaning, which is 'the view'. Just as the appearance of the village is the most important factor of the idea, how it looks draws more interest than any other factors.

Interestingly enough, although many in-migrants in Colwall gave the countryside environment as their reason for moving into the area, most of them rarely actually get into the countryside in practice. There is a well maintained and signposted public footpath network in the parish, and I walked on it quite frequently and intensively. I hardly ever came across anyone there, even on weekends. Even dog walkers go up to the hills and see the landscape from above. Few of them actually know farmers or landowners in the surrounding countryside. Even in Dymock, where persons have made so much effort to reinstate the footpath network, the situation is not very different. Except for dog walkers, residents in Dymock, whether they are

locals or in-migrants, rarely walk on the footpaths. The WPPP members walk on them regularly, but chiefly for maintenance and monitoring reasons. There are quite a few walkers in the summer time in Dymock, but most of them come from outside the area. Here again, communication between farmers/landowners and in-migrants is almost non-exist.

In other words, the countryside exists almost purely as landscape for them, and this landscape is an essential part of their place. Therefore, it becomes an object of the desire for control. One of the guidelines in the Colwall VDS states that 'farm buildings should be adequately screened and not dominate the landscape'. Farm buildings and machines are frequently described as 'eyesores'. However, scenic elements in the landscape are strictly protected: trees under the Tree Preservation Order and hedgerows under the Hedgerow Regulation. Most of the large trees in the parish are listed by the parish council. One of the first projects of the Village Society was the Hedgerow Survey which produced a detailed map of the current situation of hedgerows in the parish. Both are patrolled and closely monitored by a tree warden employed by the parish council.

This desire to control the countryside as landscape was unwittingly expressed by the chairman of the Colwall Village Society. She told me in our conversation that until her retirement, which enabled her to participate in community life in Colwall, she had not had a clear idea that the land was actually owned by someone. Of course, she had the vague knowledge that the land belonged to someone, but she did not see the landscape in that way. She told me that the idea was quite silly, but I found her passing comment quite interesting. Although the landscape of the Malvern Hills area, or the lowland English landscape in general, is a landscape of boundaries which are clearly marked by hedges and stone walls, people generally do not see it as a collection of private and public properties. I think that the chairman expressed a very common notion of the countryside today: the countryside as landscape which does not belong to anyone, and, therefore, belongs to everyone.

I mentioned her comment to my friend, who was born and bred in the countryside and regularly helps out in nearby farms, who said:

I'm slightly shocked to hear that. We would think that where things are fenced in are where there

are definite boundaries. Hedges and walls. Ownership is clear. I can understand that view in Scotland or on the moors in Yorkshire where there's no boundaries...

And you do get the impression that possibly nobody owns this. And the value of the land is low anyway, and therefore, I wouldn't say public ownership, but you have the right to roam over it. But as soon as people start to put fences up, then I find it very difficult to understand why anybody wouldn't appreciate that it's privately owned.

I mentioned the same comment to another friend who is an owner of a small estate.

He replied:

Well, I don't know ... People think that till they decide to go on walking it. It does have a feeling of being in a great sort of park or whatever until actually they try walking it, then people do get quite sort of nervous about ... you know, making sure that they're on the Right of Way and not trespassing, and being nervous if someone comes up and says 'Get off my land' or whatever.

Clearly these two persons who have actual contact with the land, do not see the countryside simply as landscape. Perhaps the difference in their perceptions of the countryside is then derived from the distance they keep from the actual land. If the 'distance' is small the land is perceived as private property, but if it is great then it becomes landscape.

Kay Milton, in her study of rural planning policy in Northern Ireland, presented two contesting discourses to represent the countryside (1993). The pro-development lobby, which consists mainly of farmers and landowners represent the countryside as 'land'. 'Land is a physical, tangible resource which can be ... bought, sold and inherited' (op. cit: 139) by a particular individual. Land is also a space of production which is often compared to a factory floor and therefore is appreciated for its functional capacity. The amenity lobby which consists of environmental groups and ramblers, on the other hand, represents the same space as 'landscape'. 'Landscape is an intangible resource, whose definitive characteristic is its appearance ... It is equally accessible to all who can see it and is therefore owned communally by them' (do). Landscape is a space of recreation whose value is determined by its aesthetic beauty.

Two different perceptions of the countryside I heard in Colwall fit into Milton's discourse of 'land' and discourse of 'landscape'. If one is in the discourse of land, one has little scope to exercise one's desire to control it unless one is the owner of the land. But if one is in the discourse of landscape, then one can justify one's desire for control since it belongs to everyone as communal property. The rural writer

Fraser Harrison, who influenced the establishment of Common Ground, wrote the following when he criticised farmers' exclusive ownership, and therefore control, of land in the countryside:

For although nature may ... belong to nobody, the countryside, which is an entirely social and cultural concept, belongs to everybody. In short, it may be their (farmers') land, but it is our countryside. ... our aesthetic perceptions are quite insensitive to the patterns made by property. The eye cannot be confined or repulsed by gates and walls; it is an incorrigible trespasser and, to that degree, our aesthetic response to the countryside is always potentially subversive. A farmer may own every acre of land as far as the horizon in every direction, but he still does not own the view. Landscape is common property. Or, to put it the other way round, there is no land so private it cannot be poached by the inquisitive eye (1986: 75, 78, also cited in Matless 1994: 48).

However, interestingly, he does not seem to think that this 'ownership' of the countryside is open to anyone who can view it. He claimed:

I do not work on the land, or own any of it. Yet I am not a tourist, and I belong to this patch of countryside as surely as the earthiest farm labourer. I live and work here, and have done so for ten years, which is, incidentally, longer than many other inhabitants (ibid: 12).

Those whom I have described in this chapter naturally perceive the countryside according to the discourse of 'landscape', and the state space management system they rely on has also been principally constructed according to this discourse. They therefore get actively involved with the system in order to realise their desire for control by influencing the decision making process of rural space management¹⁵¹.

The desire for control undoubtedly plays a major role in the footpath reinstatement movement. The public rights of way remind people of the fact that they have rights over the countryside. The existence of a footpath itself reifies their right. As Robert Frost wrote in 1914: 'we can go almost anywhere we wish on wavering footpaths through the fields'. Today's public know that they *can* walk through the countryside. Although few people actually walk there regularly, they appreciate having the right to do so. The important thing is the fact that the footpaths are there for them as the physical manifestation of their right. Ironically, however, actually walking on the footpaths reminds people of private land ownership. As my friend

¹⁵¹ However, the system does not regulate all the spatial activities which take place in rural areas. Some are more loosely controlled than others. Two of the major industries which own most of the land in the countryside, agriculture and forestry, have been largely exempted from the planning system. Although regulation of these industries has been tightened up, the principle of the state spatial management system becomes ambiguous here.

pointed out, people tend to feel nervous when they walk through footpaths in the middle of the countryside. There is always the feeling of being on somebody else's property. There are plenty of signs to remind walkers of it: 'Private', 'Keep Out', 'Keep the Right of Way' signs, locked gates, barbed wire. Furthermore, there are always some forms of obstruction, which can be as subtle as signposts hidden under sacks or a field of impenetrably grown crops. The 'village regulators' monitor these conditions and put pressure on farmers/landowners to reinstate the footpaths, and by doing so they exercise their power over the land. In other words, those who do not possess the land gain, at least partly, control of that land.

The last point touches upon the complex nature of the concept of owning land¹⁵². The land actually constitutes a bundle of the various rights, and a legally registered owner of a piece of land does not necessarily own all the rights attached to it. That owner may own the grazing rights, but he/she cannot decide to construct a building there since he/she does not possess any rights of development. The development rights belong to the state which can be influenced, through the planning system, by the public. The owner may not even own the whole surface of the land since a public right of way, whose surface belongs to the state, may run through it. In this case, the public can influence the management of the land through the highway regulation system. In these indirect ways, persons who do not possess land do share some rights attached to it. And if they choose, they can get more involved with the management of the land as regulators, regardless of their backgrounds and length of residency in the area.

¹⁵²I learned about this complexity of landownership from one of my friends. I will quote our conversation here.

K: I see. Right, then, who do you think owns the countryside?

D: Well, ownership is a difficult concept, because when you say the countryside, nobody really owns it, everybody owns it, they own different parts of it. And it's a distinction between material ownership and what you can do with that. For instance, the public have rights of way, they own those rights of way but they don't own that land on which they stand. The land round here, farmers farm the ground but the church commissions own the mineral ones for what's underneath the ground. Rivers in this country, people own the land and may actually own the river-bed, but they don't own the water in the river. We don't own the water in our well. It actually belongs to the water board. They have jurisdiction over it. Sporting rights. Somebody own a piece of ground for farming, but other people may own the sporting rights to shoot game on it. So, there is a distinction between material ownership and use..

In addition to the multiple rights attached to the land which may undermine the idea of absolute ownership of the land, the term 'land ownership' itself is often replaced with 'stewardship' or 'guardianship', which further blurs the question of ownership. In the last chapter I shall examine this notion of ownership of the countryside, to which Colwall and Dymock belong, and about which persons there feel so strongly.

Part III

Chapter 6: The Countryside

6.1. Introduction

In the previous chapters, the thesis has focused on in-migrants' activities in semi-rural England and has described the space mainly from their points of view. The main aim of this thesis is to examine and analyse such viewpoints. However, the space was not empty before their arrival. It is widely accepted that there has always been a 'distinctive' way of life in that space. This space with a particular 'way of life' is called 'the countryside'. This country way of life, which is virtually synonymous with an agricultural way of life or a rather vague image of that, is something that entices in-migrants to move into rural areas, but at the same time it can be something that the in-migrants have to confront. In either case, it is accepted as a 'fact' that the countryside has its own values.

I started my fieldwork with a focus on the English national identity, but soon I realised that people talked about this with little enthusiasm. The idea of England as a nation was something quite far removed from their lives. I did, however, find that people talked quite enthusiastically when the countryside became the topic of our conversation. Because of my extreme shyness and awkward social skills which are made worse by my spoken English, I have difficulty making smooth conversation. However, during my fieldwork I hardly had any problems since I knew what to talk about. No matter what their background was, everyone had something to say about the countryside, about which they felt very strongly. In this chapter I shall examine this 'countryside', or more specifically, the values and beliefs attached to it.

Although this space physically covers anywhere but urban and suburban spaces in England, and therefore contains vast regional differences, once dubbed the countryside, all these differences cease to be important and homogenised space emerges, in which a particular way of life is experienced. This is the view taken not only by outsiders but also by those who live in the space regardless of their backgrounds. There is, therefore, general agreement on the existence of the country

way of life. However, when it comes to establishing what this way of life actually entails, there is no clear agreement. I have presented and analysed the views of the in-migrated population in previous chapters; those views were not exclusively about the countryside but most of their sentiments were nonetheless expressed. Here I shall present those views expressed by another group of people. The people I shall describe in this chapter are those who support fox hunting, which is under strong pressure to be made illegal at the time of writing this thesis. Just as those who are classified as in-migrants are in no way a homogenous people, those who were born and bred in the locality do not share exactly the same view on the countryside and what an ideal life there means. While some in-migrants passionately support hunting, some locals oppose it strongly. However, there is a strong tendency among the locals to support hunting, or at least to show a gesture of support. I shall present their views of the countryside as those particularly supported by the locals.

In recent years, the countryside has had to endure a series of crises, starting with the BSE epidemic in the mid-1980s and reaching a peak with the outbreak of foot and mouth disease in 2001. It should be noted that the hunting protest took place in this context of crisis. Throughout these crises 'the countryside' has received a tremendous amount of media coverage. Here again, the diversity of English rural spaces was ignored and masked; the countryside was treated as a homogenous space, and this attitude extended to the characters of those who live there. These crises threatened not only the livestock sector of agriculture but also 'the way of life' attached to the space. This illusion of the countryside as a homogenised space was not simply created by the media. Those who actually live there, or at least some of them, also actively exploit this illusion. The clearest example of this occurred during the protest against the proposed ban on hunting with dogs, regarded as another crisis of the countryside. To be precise, the issue was not perceived as a crisis by all the residents of the locality. For some it was rather a sign of progress, and for others it was quite irrelevant, but for those persons I will describe in this chapter it was just as serious as other disasters.

In the following section, I shall first describe a small event which took place in Colwall as part of the organised protest against the proposed ban, and then quote

comments from the main characters of the event. Those comments were made in interviews I conducted with them on completely different occasions but they expressed their views of the countryside quite vividly, which prompted them to support the protest. With one exception, they were all brought up locally. I will then put these comments into a wider context by focusing on the media coverage of the organised protest. During this process, it will gradually become clear that this apparently minor debate over a quaint recreational activity is in reality a struggle over the dominant order to rule the rural space. In the last section, I will discuss the hegemonic order based on land ownership in the countryside, and then consider the notion and practice of stewardship as a compromise between the conflicting ideals of the spatial formation of the countryside.

6.2. Liberty and Livelihood

6.2.1. Bonfire night

On the evening of Monday, 16 September 2002, people drove to a field in one of the estates in Colwall in twos and threes. Some came from Colwall, others from neighbouring parishes, many with their families and dogs. In the middle of the field a cart was placed as a makeshift platform. People bought their snacks and drinks at a bar next to the cart and exchanged greetings with their friends. Next to the bar, three large banners were set up facing the road. Red and green banners sandwiched an illustration of a tractor. At the other corner of the field, a huge heap of dead trees and branches was piled up. The red banner said 'DON'T LET WESTMINSTER CLAMP YOUR COUNTRYSIDE!', and the green banner informed 'MARCH FOR LIBERTY AND LIVELIHOOD, LONDON 22nd SEP'. This was a local gathering for the liberty beacons and rocket relay organised by the Countryside Alliance.

According to the Alliance, over 3,000 beacons were burned across the UK and 5,000 rockets were launched in a trail from John O'Groats to London. More than 100 beacons were lit in Herefordshire and Worcestershire alone this evening. On the western side of the Malvern Hills, people gathered for the event in the three parishes

of Colwall, Mathon and West Malvern. Colwall was the largest of the three, and attracted around 200 people, many more than the organisers had expected. People wore ordinary clothing; few came in Barbours, tweeds, flat caps, or wellies that evening. I did not recognise most of them. People I asked said that most were from the farming community, but there were shiny Land Rovers and Mercs among the hatchbacks in a parking lot which were not typical of the vehicles owned by the farmers in this area. There were also a lot of children in uniform from a prep-school in Colwall, whose headmaster is a well-known supporter of field sports. The atmosphere was that of a jolly, late-summer village festival.



Plate 16: The bonfire night

At half past seven, when it became dark enough, the beacon was lit by four people, surrounded by the 200 strong crowd. Contractors' lorries passed up and down the road. It was potato harvesting season. They work all night. People applauded when Keith, a local farmer, Daniel, a local rector, and two local children lit the beacon. Someone stepped forward and began blowing a hunting horn. After some time spent appreciating the fire, people then moved around the cart, on which Keith,

Daniel and Brian, a local landowner, were standing. Daniel began his speech. He made sure at the beginning that his opinion on hunting was ambiguous, but then he expressed his concerns about the current situation of the countryside and the rural way of life, which he thought was being manipulated and destroyed by those who did not have any idea what the countryside was and how it worked. He did not wear a dog collar, but a casual shirt and dark olive-green jerkin in the style of a countryman, and he spoke in a relaxed but convincing way as a good clergyman does. He expressed his concern about the collapsing rural community which he apparently identified as the agricultural community.

After Daniel, Keith took centre stage. This man, wearing his usual blue overalls, is probably the best-known person in the parish. Big, 6ft tall, with a red face, a moustache and a loud voice, driving a no-nonsense tough Land Rover or a tractor with a dog and a shotgun in its rear seat, he is a heavy drinker, frank and hearty, who could be described as the British farmer personified. He organised most of this evening's event. Among lots of jokes and laughter, he spoke of how British farming was being distorted by the government and the EU. In the middle of his talk, he threw a picture of John Prescott out into his audience and asked them to throw it on the fire. People were pleased with that stunt. The deputy prime minister is well-known for his anti-hunting attitude. Keith wanted to express his anger about the current agricultural crisis, which was believed to have been brought about by the ignorant bureaucrats' mismanagement.

The last of the three was Brian, the largest landowner of the parish. He spoke in a much more serious tone. Since he is an active member of the Conservative Party and very keen on politics, his speech was more like that of a politician. He urged people to fight against the urban based central government and the Labour Party. He was the only one who talked mainly about the hunting issue.

The aim of this beacon and rocket relay was to herald and publicise the Liberty and Livelihood march in London the following Sunday. The main objective of the march was to protest against the proposed ban on hunting with hounds. However, none of the three people who made speech this evening hunts or shoots. Neither does the landowner who provided his field for the beacon. They spoke little

about the hunting issue but a lot about the countryside. In their speeches, they described the countryside as if it were an independent entity with its own mechanism to function and with its own sense of values. They did not speak of Colwall but of the countryside to which they seem to assume as a matter of course that Colwall, or this part of Colwall at least, belonged.

6.2.2. Talking about the countryside: four views

Brian comes from a well-established Colwall family which has owned land in Colwall since 1609. He is now in his 40s and the current owner of the estate. With 1,000 acres of land in his estate, he is currently the largest landowner in the parish. The estate is managed in a traditional way, that is, rented out to tenant farmers. He lives in a Georgian country house outside the settlement area, and once told me that he did not know very much about the people who live in the settlement area. In a sense, he lives life that is isolated from most of the current residents in Colwall. However, because of his family background he is treated with respect and invited to various formal occasions.

Well, He takes a very conservative stance as a traditional landowner and as a member of the Conservative Party, which means that he is a strong believer in private property rights. He told me that he thought he was extremely lucky to have been born into a landowning family and was very happy to 'look after' the family property. Here he expressed a version of the notion of stewardship, to which I will return later. At the same time, although he did not explicitly express his opposition to the public interests relating to his property, it was clear in our conversation that he saw such interests, namely public rights of way, the designation of the AONB and planning control, as something undesirable which hindered his control over his property. In addition to the old landed family's almost instinctive preference for field sports, this issue of control over private property seems to play a part in his strong support of fox hunting.

He insisted that he did not personally hunt or shoot. He said that he supported hunting because he regarded it as an important part of the fabric of the countryside which connected various aspects of life there. Once the fabric was

removed, then country life in its entirety would soon be lost. However, what country life actually consists of is not very clear from his explanation.

Daniel may give us a further clue. He was brought up in a rural village just outside Birmingham and has lived in Colwall for 20 years as a rector. A talented musician and a vintage car enthusiast, he is loved by many residents in Colwall. He devotes himself to various local organisations, and is especially known for his deep commitment to the hospice movement. He is also a much trusted and respected figure of the parish. Once when I asked him about the image he had of England in his childhood, he made the following comment:

for me, my understanding was somehow, the heart of England was in the countryside. I know the economic part was in the town. And I know the political heart was in the town, you know, but the heart that you can value and what was most important is in those beautiful images of the countryside. That would be the impression.

When I pressed him as to why he had thought that the heart of England was in the countryside, he replied:

Well, there're two reasons, I suspect. One is just a ... due to the reaction to the rhythms of the countryside, so there's something about what I knew, what I felt safe, I suspect. Secondly, I think much more rational ... much more rational, in a sense, of the feeling that you're better in a place to understand yourself and your relationship to what you are and where you live, if you have more immediate contact with the natural state. So, if you were in the rather more artificial social environment of the town, then you're not quite so close to those things of nature which tell you a lot about yourself ... there was feeling on the way Mao Tse-tung. ... in 1960s China, you know, Mao Tse-tung had this thing about it was good for academics, people living in the towns, to spend, you know, one year out of every ... I can't remember ... eight years, working in the fields. That seems to me to be a very sensible idea. I don't think necessarily for the reasons he thought so. I mean, he thought it was much more to do with breaking down some sort of social boundaries. But in terms of ... putting people in touch with what the realities are, it seems to me to have something to recommend it.

To sum up, he regarded the countryside as a place of superior morality. It is a genuine and 'natural' place, in which one can be more rational and reflective. The close contact with one's environment enables one to reach such a state. Needless to say, this is a rather conventional and widely accepted view on the countryside¹⁵³, and

¹⁵³ This is especially so in Western Europe after the strong influence of Romanticism, or after Wordsworth in England. Ian Ousby pointed out:

Wordsworth has most influenced our own attitude to nature, transforming the cults of the Sublime

taking his occupation into consideration, it is no wonder that he took this view. He said he had always been interested in a community in the countryside, such as the one he was brought up in. So, when the bishop of Hereford asked him to become a rector of Colwall, he accepted with curiosity. He admitted that he had had and still held an idealised view of the countryside. However, he stressed that he had always felt it was natural for him to be in the countryside, and he told me that curiosity and idealisation could not keep him in the same place for 20 years. He then said that he felt uncomfortable about a certain kind of idealisation such as the 'Disneyfied' or anthropomorphised view of animals when he referred to hunting, and he also stressed the importance of actual life in the countryside:

People can find peace and relaxation in the countryside, but there's also a cycle of hardship and sometimes cruel reality about how nature works ... I mean, obviously something like fox-hunting is much in discussion at the moment. People aren't aware sometimes of the harder edges of living in the countryside. If you're a farmer you need sometimes to gather your crops all night if you've got decent weather, so you've got noise. You need to fertilise fields, you've got smell. You need to move animals around, it's going to make noise and create traffic hold-ups.

He defined the countryside through the socio-economic activities taking place there, and the activities are basically those related to farming. A countryside community ought to be an agrarian community, and its basic function should be farming. In that sense, Colwall cannot be called a country village. He conceded by describing it as 'in transition'.

A generation ago [Colwall] would've been countryside. It would have had a high degree of people who worked on the land. It would have had a high percentage of the population that were of families from the village, and [people] would have made all cultural association within that community. That's not so now ... they[residents of Colwall]'ve changed as well. There're a lot of ... people in their 70s and 80s who were part of traditional Colwall families and their successors simply can't afford to live here, because it becomes ... suburbanised. People come in, and prices are forced up.

In a sense, what Colwall actually is something different from, or that had been changed from, what he personally appreciates. In addition to making a gesture of support to the ailing local farming community which had been badly hit by the milk

and the Picturesque, which now look like period pieces, into that most complex of responses we call Romanticism, which is still part of the intellectual climate we live in ... No longer merely a stimulus to be exploited or a spectacle to be judged, nature has become for Wordsworth 'something far more deeply interfused': a living force embracing the individual soul and communicating with it, to console, uplift and ennoble (1990: 137-8, partly cited in Macnaghten and Urry 1998: 176-7).

and livestock price collapse and foot and mouth disease, it was perhaps his personal sentiment of the idea of the countryside that had prompted him to come to the gathering. He might not have supported hunting *per se*, since he has no personal involvement with, or interest in, the activity, but he seemed to perceive it as a symbol of the countryside and the community.

He described the character of a rural community in terms of its dominant occupation, continuity and enclosedness. The 'country way of life', then, is supposed to mean the lives of the people who are fallen into these categories. Whether that is true or not is another story, but it is generally believed that the farming community and the old, established families support hunting, and those people are supposed to be the very core of the 'rural community' and perpetuate the 'way of life'. As a matter of fact, during the campaign against the proposed ban, the word 'way of life' was repeatedly used without ever being clearly defined, as we will see later.

Daniel came to address those who were supposed to represent the ideal rural community. As his speech made clear, the proposed ban on hunting was taken as another intervention from 'outside' against the already disappearing 'country way of life'. Farmers as a group were not in favour of hunting; some actually opposed it and several were rather indifferent to it. Nor did all the people born and bred in the countryside support hunting. A fair number of members of the in-migrated population, most of whom were rather wealthy, did support hunting, which they again regarded as a crucial part of the 'country way of life'. Although there was a definite presence of farmers and locals at the gathering, in a sense Daniel addressed those who had moved in and adopted, at least partially, the 'country way of life'.

As one of the now few farmers in the parish, Keith has a lot to say about the countryside. Farming is in his 'blood'; his family is one of the old farming families in this region. Since his grandfather's time, his family has practised farming in Colwall as tenants of an old estate. Brian is his landlord. Although they have a 'love-hate' relationship, they refer to each other as 'friend'. This kind of close tenant-landowner relationship is quite rare these days. His farm consists of 350 acres of leased land from the estate and 50 acres of his own land. It is a typical mixed farm, rearing sheep

and cattle and growing corn. Keith was born and brought up in Colwall and went into farming straight after school, just like the overwhelming majority of tenant farmers in his generation. His farm has suffered a lot in recent years, just as many other livestock farms in the UK have. Stock prices plunged after the BSE crisis and have never recovered. He also lost some of his stock during the foot and mouth epidemic because of a precautionary measure taken by the then MAFF. Some of his comments reveal his frustration and also show his idea of the countryside, which is quite simple and clear. It is first and foremost a place to produce food. When I asked him about the idea of the farmer as a countryside steward, he replied:

Uh ... If I die tomorrow, I would rather be known as a person who produced food for the nation ... combined a little bit of conservation, rather than the sort of ... you know, a guardian of the countryside, conservation orientated. For me, that isn't what land's all about. The land is about producing food. You can combine the two. There's no doubt about it. But we needn't go too far one way or the other. What you've got to do is to create balance. And that is the art of agriculture, I feel anyway. A lot of farmers wouldn't agree with what I say, but you've got to try to create the balance. And it's very easy for the government to sort of sit down and say, you know, 'Oh, well, let's have some wonderful fields with wild flowers'. But at the end of the day, if you get hungry, you can't eat flowers ... And I find it quite strange. I find it bizarre. This Countryside Stewardship thing. That they're encouraging, they want to encourage ditches to have water in them all the time. Now, as a farmer, you're always encouraged to drain your fields, make sure crops grow better, so therefore you kept all your ditches clean. But now, they want to silt it up, so little birds can live there, you see. At the end of the day, what do they want?

He expressed his contempt quite clearly, for the fact that conservation-oriented land management is quite the opposite of the ideal form of space formation for farmers in general. When I talked with a retired farmer about the Countryside Stewardship Scheme, which I shall discuss later, he gave me his perception of the landscape:

K: How about you? When you practised farming, did you care for the landscape?

A: Well, I think I was in justice in it, but I was ... once I bought some land, and it was very wet, boggy, and I drained it right the way through and I actually made it quite productive, and because [***] fact on that, boggy land when the spring stopped running in May, you only have 2 months really where you could put animals on it at all, because the spring started running again, and it's very boggy. So, I suppose that as regards landscape, I wanted it to be convenient for the farming. I didn't go out of my way to preserve it ...

For farmers, the ideal landscape in the countryside is the landscape of productivity rather than the landscape of amenity. Keith also often expressed his doubt about conservation based policy of countryside management.

I think, you know, you've got a situation down in this country where ... some of the dairy men are actually encouraged to put hanging baskets with flowers around the dairy. You know, to me, that's

totally bizarre. I mean, it has no benefit to the cow, it has no benefit to the milk producer or the consumer. The fact is that it looks a little bit prettier. There's no respect for real life. And I think this just about sums up the government, and their attitude toward the countryside ... But they're seriously losing sight of what the countryside is all about. The countryside really is a factory, isn't it? It's a working unit. It's a living entity.

However, he was not indifferent to the aesthetic value of the countryside as a working unit. His aesthetic standards for evaluating the countryside, however, are not quite the same as those held by the in-migrated population. He implied this when he compared farming to coal mining:

when people sort of compare agriculture to coal mining, you know, they say, 'All right. Shut all coal mines down.' But basically if you shut the coal mine, what do you shut, you shut the hole in the ground. You know, you remove the plant at the top and that's it. While the countryside continues to live. I mean, if I walk away from my garden for a fortnight or a month, it becomes a wilderness. And the same is true of the fields. If you don't keep your eye on them, you know, it's a lot of work, you know, hedgerows, ditches and everything.

He feels that this living entity has been manipulated by outside decisions.

I feel somewhat bizarre. When I left school in 1965, the government encouraged this, to drain wet fields and fill in ponds and knock hedgerows and make fields bigger and more efficient. Intensive farming. We were encouraged to do that. And when they encouraged this, we had massive funds. There were grants available, 100% sometimes. The government paid 100% towards somebody's draining schemes to rejuvenate the land. And now, you've got massive grants handed out to recreate wetlands, to create hedgerows and woodland upon wetlands. To me, it seems bizarre that all this money comes one way and is now coming back the other way. At the end of the day, who do they blame? They blame the farmer ... most of those people that came up with those ideas, to encourage us to do what we did in the 60s are no longer in business. They've gone, they retired, they finished. But most of the farmers are still there.

He thinks this 'outside' influence enforced by the government is also backed by the majority of the population in this country who live in towns.

although I think they are seriously misguided, that the government firmly believe, and urban masses firmly believe that the countryside should be some huge leisure park. And you know, they really just want somewhere to walk around and see wildlife. The funny part of this is that the majority of them seem to sort of pick up a map and jump out of their cars and take off across a footpath, and it's how far you can get from A to B. More than let's see what's over here and when we get here. You know, they put their packs on their backs, and they go here to the next village and back around, and say 'Oh well, we did.' You don't see anything. You know, they don't see. I'm afraid it's the nature of the beast ... I feel we're seriously fed up with being manipulated by people that really don't understand working in the countryside. After all, it's a living environment, isn't it.

He suspects that people in towns have different values from country people. This division of town and country is also mentioned by Daniel:

Oh, I'm sure there's enormous difference. I think both sides are very wary, both very misinformed

about the others. Enormous amount of ignorance on both sides. And I think particularly town people expect things from the countryside just on their [terms] and they're not expecting some of the more practical aspects of the traditional countryside

Keith has first hand experience of 'townies' ignorance' of the practical aspects of the countryside.

we call them Nimbies. You get a lot of that. I mean, I suppose it's very easy for people like me to get a little bit hung up about town people, because ... sounds and smells of the countryside are something they haven't taken into consideration. They look at the photograph, the countryside is a beautiful, idyllic, rural scene. But with the tractors going up and down, you know, planting crops or whatever it might be, or harvesting the crops, they don't want that. They don't want cows mooing, sheep bleating, dogs barking, church bells ringing, and what have you. They're bizarre ... Lot of people like me feel a serious chip on their shoulder, and say 'Oh, here's another townie. Now, what's the next complaint?', you know.

When I pointed out that especially in the 1970s and 1980s farmers were regarded as wreckers of the countryside and many still hold that view, he told me that it was also 'outside forces' that changed the countryside.

basically they were industrialists, most of them, you know, money didn't come from an agricultural base, it came from industry, and they came here with millions to spend. And every farm that came up for sale, in one area in particular, this guy bought everything. I mean, hundreds of acres of arable, and he knocked out every hedgerow. This one area, west of here is basically prairie ... Absolutely ridiculous. That's sad when that happens. But, you find that more, you can find that more, possibly from outside capital. I don't think farmers really generated that much wealth to grow that quick, you know.

There is some truth in his words. In an adjoining parish, a millionaire, who made his fortune from North Sea oil, bought up land around his country house and knocked out whole hedges literally overnight then converted the land into a large field of corn. When he found he could get a better rate of subsidy, the field became a set-aside which is now called a nature reserve since it gets a better grant for that purpose. Whatever the name, it is now nothing but unkempt wilderness, which is so at odds with the surrounding fields that it is easily spotted from the hills. Keith gave me another example of outside capital destroying the countryside.

If anything destroys the countryside, it's development, it's houses. I mean, beautiful little villages that were in England 50 years ago just disappearing, I mean, they're constantly building, cramming more houses in, because, obviously the general public, townies, want to come out here. They want to live here in this environment and go back to town to work, to commute.

He said that the countryside could be managed perfectly well by the country people who were born and bred in the countryside and work mainly in the farming sector. He

wanted to minimise the urban influence. He has little to do with hunting personally, but he saw this issue of the proposed ban on hunting as a symbol of the urban population's desire to control his patch, 'the countryside'.

As his comments clearly show, he has a solid confidence in his belonging to the countryside, which is there for farmers to produce food. He likened the countryside to a factory. Unlike many members of the in-migrated population, it is not 'nature' for him. For Keith, 'nature' is wilderness, which is something undesirable. Like many farmers, he is very fussy about the appearance of his fields, which should be kept tidy. The 'nature reserve' is very unpopular among neighbouring farmers. For them the countryside, whether it is fields or woodlands, is something that should be managed carefully and kept tidy for the purpose of production. The unkempt wilderness was seen as a sign of negligence and waste. The countryside is a carefully tended space of production, so the 'real life' in the space should be connected to this process of production. Keith is very proud of being a farmer who produces food, which is the most basic commodity, for the nation. Therefore, anything that hinders this process is perceived as something undesirable.

He was not yet quite accustomed to the environmental schemes which would lead him in a completely opposite direction from where he was encouraged to go in the past. He suspected that this direction was forced on him by those who did not know the 'real' countryside in order to 'make things a little bit more pretty'. In other words, it is regarded as something superficial and unnecessary. Recently, it has become a trend to replace the term 'farmer' with 'countryside steward' to emphasise their role in the conservation of the countryside. However, this is not a simple switch. To be called a countryside steward is not quite the same as being called a farmer who carries out 'essential and serious' business. Even as a tenant, a 'farmer' conducts his own business in his own right and keeps control over the land to some extent in exchange for the rent he pays to a landowner. Whereas a steward implies someone who manages other people's property for them. He does not have any right to claim control over the land since it belongs to someone else and he is simply paid to manage the land. Many farmers, including Keith, do not like this implication.

Another contentious implication of this changing trend is whom the

'steward' is supposed to 'serve'. 'Urban masses', 'the general public', 'townies' were the words chosen by Keith to describe the master he is now supposed to 'serve'. Needless to say, all these words contain a note of contempt, and all derive from the age-old conventional division between town and country. In this scheme, both places are perceived as bounded entities with their own mutually opposed values. Those who regard themselves as country folk often express their resentment at being looked down upon and manipulated by town people. Keith told me:

I think possibly town people have different values to us country people ... I firmly believe that a lot of people who come out here think they know all the answers, and we just [stand] for many years, straw sticking out of the head, or hat or whatever. And you know, they do know best. But, at the end of the day, British agriculture has been very very successful, so we are all chewing straw and spitting it.

I assume he was following, to some extent, the generally accepted conventional discourse of town and country when he told me this. At the same time, however, it is also true that he had some bitter feelings about the fact that what he is good at and what he believes right, in the place where he has spent and worked all his life and where he firmly believes he 'naturally' belongs.

What he was annoyed at was not only the in-migrated population whose expectation of the countryside are incompatible with his but also housing developments and intensive farming, both of which are planned and imposed by 'outside' for 'outsiders'. His strong support for the hunting fraternity is based not so much on his enthusiasm for this 'sport', since, like many other farmers of his scale and background, he has never taken part in a hunt, as on his repulsion towards 'outside' forces which impose 'undesirable' changes. However, since, ironically, one of the two hunts based in this area is often dubbed the 'estate agent hunt', those who actually enjoy the 'sport' might be the same people who have the power to impose developments.

The last of the four is Steve. The young landowner, who offered his field for the beacon evening, explained it from a different angle. This owner of a small estate of 130 acres was educated at Eton and Cambridge and trained as a landscape architect. He now works as an advisor for one of the government quangos dealing with

countryside issues. His father bought the estate when he was six and he was brought up in Colwall until being sent to boarding school. After working in London and abroad, he came back to Colwall to manage the estate. Although he was technically brought up in Colwall, but he had thus been rather detached from the place until recently. Both his parents come from long standing landowning families, but he and his family hold quite 'liberal' views. He is the chairman of the local Liberal Democrats group. He does not hunt or shoot, although woodland belonging to his estate is leased out to a local shooting syndicate.

His reason for supporting the hunting is also not absolutely clear. He supported it on two different grounds. His libertarian belief in defending an individual's rights to pursue his/her own interests without interference from others is probably at the root of his position. As well as this ideological position, his social background as a member of the upper-middle landed class seemed to give him a stronger emotional commitment to this issue. Although he has never participated in hunting himself¹⁵⁴, it is after all part of the 'culture' of his class, to which he expressed a strong attachment. He is quite conscious of his background as a country landowner.

Despite, or because of, his deep interest in countryside issues, he dismissed the conventional division and opposition of town and country. Unlike the other three, he did not draw a clear boundary between town and country, and those who live in each place. He told me that the division was somehow artificially created and exaggerated:

I don't feel any difference from someone living in London. We just live in different places. But it does seem to be that there's stronger antipathy growing ... I think there is definitely the feeling that the urban-based government is trying to tell the rural based community what to do.

He raised the hunting issue as a good example of this process:

for instance, most people are, I mean the hunting debate, most people are against hunting. I don't actually think it's a town/country issue, because I know quite a lot of people who live in the country who are against it, and people living in town who are for it. But it feels like that sort of urban

¹⁵⁴ The equestrian activities, with which hunting is inseparably connected, are generally regarded more as female pastime in Britain. Girls of a certain class or wealth are encouraged to take it up. They often join up a pony club which is in many cases connected to a local hunt. In a hunt gathering, female riders usually outnumber males, which is especially so in younger members of the hunt.

majority is saying that people living in the countryside can't do that.

He has a point here. Fox hunting these days is such a low-key activity, conducted by a very small number of people, that even residents of rural areas rarely notice it happening. It would be an exaggeration to call it an essential part of rural life. For most of the rural population, like it or not, it is a rather irrelevant activity. In other words, one's reason for supporting the activity cannot be explained by one's rural residence. However, the hunting lobby deftly exploited and exaggerated the old dichotomy between town and country by making hunting a symbol of the latter entity. They succeeded in enlarging the issue from the old-fashioned pastime of a small number of people to a symbol of a particular way of life with which many people empathise. In other words, the town/country dichotomy in the context of the hunting issue depends not so much on the geographical location of one's residence as on one's state of mind, as Steve pointed out. It still seems to be the case, however, that he would not have supported hunting had he not been brought up in and owned his country estate. The element of owning the land seems to be an important factor in his perception of the countryside.

When I asked him what kind of connotation the word 'countryside' had, he answered:

I mean an almost sort of clichéd image of tranquillity and openness and whatever. It sounds timeless, whereas the city doesn't. [It] sounds indefinite in a way; city sounds very definite.

Then I asked him about which activities he associated with the countryside:

I think very gentle activities really. Just sort of strolling and ... relaxing and talking ... just gentleness. It's difficult to say, because in reality it may not be ... I don't even think about working in the countryside. The countryside and work are almost [contradictory].

This comment seemed to me to reflect a general trend in which the countryside is seen as a recreational space. I suggested that these existed a shifting or shifted image of the countryside, that is, the countryside as a resource having become the countryside as recreation. He disagreed. He thought that it was not a shift in the image but that different people had different associations regarding the countryside.

I suppose ... I don't think of it as a shift of the image. I think it's just a shrinking base of people who recognise it as a place of production, I mean, no one comes out of the city, or no one comes to the countryside to plough. And very few people living in the countryside plough ... The reality was that

50 years ago an awful lot more people lived on and earned their living from the land. And I think it was... if you look at the sort of films of the 1950s ... sort of cheerful documentaries about the countryside, that's very much [what] happened in farming ... I don't know that image necessarily exists any more. I think it's much more as a depository of wildlife ... But, again, if you [read] P.G. Wodehouse and his description of going to the country, it is not different from how I would say I'm off to the country ... you're off to have a jolly weekend for playing tennis or going for a walk or whatever. Probably no mention of a farmer. So, I think now just more people have access to that.

Although Steve and Keith are very good friends and some of Steve's land is leased out to farmers, farming did not play a large role in his idea of the countryside. Unlike Keith, he did not regard the countryside as a food factory. He was not always sympathetic to farmers, or at least he did not give a privileged place to farmers in his image of the countryside. He regarded that the dominance of farming in the countryside was a modern post-war phenomenon which was now returning to its original position.

if you read Flora Thompson¹⁵⁵, agriculture is only a part of it ... and [there's] a sort of implicit recognition of diversity. And all that happened just after the war. Agriculture was promoted at the expense of everything else. So, in a way, there was a shift away from what had existed half a century or so ago ... I don't know if it's necessarily a shift, but I think now, this is just a reaction to that.

He thought that the diversity of life in the countryside had been destroyed by the rapid and reckless expansion of agriculture, which was made possible by massive grants provided by the UK government and then the Common Agricultural Policy. I asked him about the idea of farmers as guardians of the countryside. He replied:

I think the word guardian is a bit too strong ... the real guardians were landowners. And when more and more landowners started selling up ... farmers bought their own farms. Farmers did terrible things that landowners [wouldn't have done]. For instance, where I work [he mentioned a place where another estate of his was located] there were beautiful park trees which obviously the landowner would want to keep, but as soon as the landowner folded up, [a farmer bought the land and cut the] trees. So, I think the farmer was not a guardian at all of the countryside in one respect, although they are very good producers of food. ... in a way [the landowning class is more concerned with the countryside], because I can't see why ... for instance, this here is all countryside, it happens to be planted with big parkland trees. Now, if I was a farmer, I would prefer to let these die, and not replace them. And why should I replace them? There's no real reason. As someone who sort of can see the link between the park and the house and whatever, there is a very obvious reason to replace them. But that is a luxury point of view, isn't it? I think it's good. But you're basically saying that we wish the countryside to be preserved as it first appeared in the 17th and 18th centuries. And that is the role that ordinary people [want to take]. They [want to keep] the countryside for recreation.

Here he vividly described his image of the countryside, which is, for him, essentially

¹⁵⁵ Flora Thompson (1876-1947) was a well-known country writer. Her best selling autobiographical trilogy of *Lark Rise* (1939), *Over to Candleford* (1941) and *Candleford Green* (1943), which were reissued as one volume entitled *Lark Rise to Candleford* (1945), was a candid depiction of ordinary

landscape. Regardless of its expected functions, being there just to be appreciated or for strolling around, it is a man-made space which was created and maintained according to a particular taste. Moreover, the space was created for people belonging to a particular class. It was the landed class that Steve regarded as the 'desirable' and 'appropriate' people to which the countryside should belong. His social and professional background was probably the reason for his having this view. Just like Keith, Steve did not regard the countryside as 'nature'. Both regarded the countryside as a managed space. While Keith likened it to a food factory, Steve considered it as a kind of art, which requires a certain taste to appreciate and manage it. In other words, unlike 'nature', which is not supposed to belong to anyone, the countryside, like a piece of art, should be placed in appropriate hands, in order to keep its 'value'.

Although he valued the countryside mainly as landscape, he also mentioned the community aspect of the space. Regarding this aspect, he again tended to stress the importance of traditional landowners in the countryside. When I started my fieldwork, he recommended that I should study the neighbouring parish, Eastnor. The 5,000-acre parish is still entirely owned by one family who has lived in a castle in the centre of the parish for generations. When we talked about the idea of the English village, he said:

K: So, English village idealism is fake?

S: It is fake. It is entirely fake, because no one [speaks] to each other. And that's why, a place like Eastnor is quite interesting, because such a strong focus in terms of the castle, and the whole village is still owned by it, so everyone has an interest in what's going on there. And that is to me a traditional village. But somewhere like Colwall, there're sorts of outposts of Colwall where, you know, Barton Court owns a bit of it ... and sort of remnants of old tenanted farms where they still rely on the landlord, so they're coming and going. But a lot of Colwall, I just don't think ...

A close-knit community is one whose coherence is guaranteed by the presence of a landowner who lives in well-maintained parkland as a hub of the community. Whether he appreciates this hierarchical social setting as an ideal community is doubtful. He would probably rather want to stress the role of the landlord as the focal point in the parish. Every parishioner, like it or not, has to pay close attention to him, since his estate owns everything there, therefore they have common interests which bind them as a group. However, the landowner can remain the focal point precisely

people's country lives in the pre-war era.

because of his power and control over the land and other properties. In other words, without this hierarchical order the 'ideal' community cannot be sustained. Therefore, when he gave the social setting as an ideal, he simultaneously accepted the hierarchical order which enabled that setting to exist. It is this social setting that he believed creates and maintains the countryside, and its landscape, in a form he appreciates.

He often talked about the crucial role of landowners in the countryside. He stressed the difference between owning land and owning a house in the country when I asked about the very British trend to purchase a country house as a symbol of success.

K: But in this country, when people have success and attain wealth, they tend to purchase land in the countryside, because the place symbolises wealth.

S: But that is different from owning land. I think what happens lot now is ... yes, people buy a house in the country, but it's a sort of cottage or something or an old rectory, and it's got a garden. That's it. That is different from owning land. I think they're just living in the country, because it's civilised and it's got space where children ... and your friends are doing the same, and people get extremely attached to their houses ... But I think it is fundamentally different from actually owning and managing the land.

He believed that owning land required more responsibility. His own property is very carefully managed in a sympathetic and subtle way which looks so 'natural' that untutored eyes easily pass it without noticing. However, he by no means approved of all the landowners and their ways of managing their land simply because they have owned it for a long time. He was quite aware of some of the landowners' ignorance of their own land, especially those who own a significant amount of land, which is managed by agents, and that their management of the land tends to be driven by profits rather than responsibility. He was quite critical of this approach. He believed that land ownership should come with guardianship of the land. His understanding of the idea of guardianship seems to be an expression of a kind of morality and responsibility to maintain the particular form of landscape he inherited and to pass it down to the next owner of the land. Here, a sense of continuity is expressed. This continuity, however, is that of a private property, which can be synonymous with the continuity of a particular family in some cases. Since the landscape itself was created according to the taste of a particular class, proper maintenance, or guardianship, of the landscape requires an appreciation of that taste. In other words, those who 'guard'

the landscape, wittingly or unwittingly, play the role of guardian of the values of the landed class, with which the landscape has been closely associated.

He was often quite critical of new buildings and new arrangements for the land in the parish, which he regarded as uninteresting or inappropriate alterations. Those alterations tended to be carried out by in-migrants. However, what he talked about here was not the local/incomer opposition, but simply a lack of taste. A 'true' appreciation of the existing 'proper' pattern or form of the countryside requires a particular taste, one which appreciates not only the physical appearances of the landscape but also the social settings that enable it to exist. Hunting is part of the social setting attached to the landscape, which seemed to be the reason why he supported this activity.



Plate 17: A farm barn in Colwall

These are the prominent supporters of the beacon gathering in Colwall. They have overlapping but different agendas and views regarding the place called 'the countryside'. All of them have a profound emotional attachment to the place, and feel that it is threatened by outside forces. However, the evening itself was nothing like a

political gathering but more like a relaxed family outing. After the speeches, people gathered here and there to chat and share gossip. On the flank of the Malvern Hills, there was another beacon flickering in the dark. At about a quarter past eight, rockets were launched from Colwall, West Malvern and other places on this side of the hills, which went all the way down to London that night.

6.2.3. Local reaction

The day before, I had had tea in a friend's garden. A couple whom I knew very well passed in front of the house on their bicycles and came back to the gate after noticing me. They are active members of the Colwall Village Society, and had moved into a settlement area of Colwall from the south east five years previously. After exchanging greetings, I told them that I had come back to see the Countryside Alliance events. They did not reply to me directly for some reason, but complained to my friend that there were a lot of Countryside Alliance posters on the lime tree avenue. They seemed to be rather annoyed by these posters. Then they told me about a new pictorial map of the parish which the Colwall Village Society had made, and which had just been completed and was being delivered to every household in the parish. He added mischievously and happily that a picture of a lovely fox had been put on the map. I was not sure if this was just a coincidence or if it was a deliberate and subversive statement against field sports. Whatever the intention, an innocent-looking fox, depicted alongside a rabbit and flowers, seemed to please some people in the parish.

A few days after the beacon evening, I visited or bumped into people living both in and outside the parish. Some said that I would see lots of rich people on the march. Another said that the countryside had been so neglected for a long time, and it was a good chance to show townies the reality of the countryside. However, generally speaking, people living outside the settlement area and those who had lived in the area for a long time tended to be quite supportive, or sympathetic at least, to the march. People living in the settlement area, on the other hand, were either indifferent to the issue or mildly hostile. This tendency was stronger among recent urban

migrants. The Malvern Hills Conservators, which owns and runs the hills and commons in this area, received several complaints about beacons on the hill and posters along the commons. In Colwall only one grocery showed solidarity for the march by putting the *Daily Mail's Save Our Countryside* poster in its window.

Steve asked his LibDem friends to support the march but they all refused to do so. He also asked shops and the post office in Colwall to display the Countryside Alliance sticker but all were reluctant. At the post office he had a heated argument. No matter how hard he argued that this was for the whole countryside including struggling shops and rural post offices, they did not change their view that the march was for preserving hunting. They did not react to the word 'countryside', nor did they identify themselves as country folk in that situation. This was the same sort of picture I got from people living in Malvern town. The march was about hunting, which was a barbaric activity enjoyed by the arrogant rich.

For those who did support the march, field sport was recognised as a symbol of the countryside and life there. For others, it was nothing but an outdated tasteless form of recreation and the march was a last-ditch attempt by those who did not know when to give up. Neither side regarded hunting as simply a form of outdoor recreational activity. Even people on the anti-hunting side, who expressed their opposition mainly on moral grounds, against the enjoyment of killing, it is rare that the class issue was not mentioned in one way or another. It cannot be denied that the 'sport' is almost inseparably associated with a particular hierarchical social structure and social relationship, which was essentially created by and for the benefit of landowners. This social structure and relationship, on top of which the landed class resides, is strongly associated with the countryside. In other words, the debate over hunting is also a debate over this spatially positioned hierarchical social structure and the values attached to that structure. The sport and the social formation are so closely connected, one functioning as a symbol of the other, that to accept one and reject the other is generally considered unrealistic.

What those opposed to hunting, especially those who actually live in the countryside, feel uncomfortable about is not just 'cruelty' to the animal but also all the values and beliefs associated with the activity. The values and beliefs derive

ultimately from the ownership of land and the power to exercise control over it. To live in the countryside is to be surrounded by the land which is the very source of the power. This land has long been conventionally presented and understood as a collection of fragments of private properties in the countryside. In other words, the countryside as an assemblage of privately controlled spaces has long been a dominant view there. And it is on this foundation of the power over the private spaces that this particular social structure resides. The hierarchical social structure is essentially constructed according to the access to and the power to control the land.

To support hunting is in effect also to make a gesture of appreciation of the social structure and values attached to it which can be out of sentimental reasons rather than out of personal interest. It has already been made clear that it is not only those who belong to the landed class who support hunting. Regardless of their social positions, those who appreciate these values support hunting. I will return to this issue of hegemony later, but I will first examine the role of the organiser and then the media coverage of the Liberty and Livelihood march.

6.2.4. The Countryside Alliance

The formal title of the march was 'Liberty and Livelihood': 'liberty' to continue hunting, and 'livelihood' to help struggling farming and rural communities. It is widely recognised that this is a strategy of the hunting lobby used to attract more support for their campaign by referring to general problems in rural areas. The Countryside Alliance published five principles for the march.

1. Defends the right of rural people to live their lives responsibly in the way they choose
2. Safeguards rural people from prejudiced attacks on hunting with dogs and all other field sports
3. Respects the values and customs of rural communities
4. Ensures any laws directed at rural people have their consent
5. Addresses the real problems of the countryside which are destroying its communities, its culture, and its children's future

Only the last item directly refers to the 'livelihood' aspect of the march. The Alliance warned on its website that 'anyone who does not subscribe to all five principles of our march will not be welcome on it'. Items 1, 3 and 4 are rather vague. Considering the context, these items should be interpreted as a defence against the proposed ban on hunting, but they can be read in a different way. Regardless of the organiser's

actual intention, they have the effect of creating an image of an autonomous entity which has its own 'values and customs', or culture, in readers' minds. This entity is the countryside which is occupied by 'rural people'.

The term 'rural people' has the effect of representing ordinary humble residents of the countryside. However, the background of the Alliance presents a rather different reality¹⁵⁶. The Countryside Alliance is a registered charity which presents itself as a broad-based rural campaign group. It was formally established in 1998 through the amalgamation of The British Field Sports Society (BFSS), the Countryside Business Group (CBG) and the Countryside Movement (CM). The BFSS was an overt hunting lobby which was formed in 1930 as a reaction to a Bill to abolish stag hunting in 1929. The CBG, which was initially called as the Country Sports Business Group, was rather an obscure organisation founded by an Anglo-American financier and corporate lawyer to raise funds from countryside-related businesses to save fox-hunting. The CM was founded in 1995 and claimed that its aim was to campaign on rural issues rather than hunting. However, it was created with financial backing from the BFSS and the CBG. When it went into significant deficit after overspending its budget, it was the Duke of Westminster who rescued it with his pocket money of £ 1m. Moreover the National Farmers' Union and the Country Landowners Association, whose spokesman was the chairman of the CM, were closely linked with the CM. These three organisations jointly organised the Countryside Rally in 1997 in Hyde Park, which mobilised 120,000 people to demonstrate their determination to fight against the impending ban on fox-hunting, a ban which had become realistic with the victory of New Labour, who had promised to ban fox hunting. They merged into the Countryside Alliance the following year.

The Alliance organised another march in 1998 in London, which attracted 285,000 people, to challenge the Labour government. As the Alliance itself makes clear, their main aim has always been to keep fox-hunting legal. But at the same time, they adopt more inclusive tactics to gain wider support. They not only started

¹⁵⁶ The following information about the organisation was mainly obtained from *The Countryside Alliance: voice of the rural dispossessed?!*, a document produced by the Oxford based research group Corporate Watch (http://www.corporatewatch.org.uk/pages/countryside_alliance.pdf).

campaigning for other field sports, such as shooting and angling which the lobby insists are the next targets of 'urban intolerance' after fox-hunting, but also for more general rural problems. The Alliance runs campaigns for affordable houses and broadband access in rural areas. Their campaign also covers farming and other businesses, demanding that regulations that include planning to create a more 'flexible' business environment be restricted. It also promotes local food and supports food co-operatives in rural areas. The Alliance's policy handbook covers a wide range of issues in rural areas from the CAP reform to the decreasing number of post offices, from employment opportunities to crime and policing (Countryside Alliance 2002). In other words, although their commitment to non-hunting issues is far less enthusiastic than that to hunting, the Alliance addresses pretty much every problem associated with rural areas. In doing so, they try to present themselves as a patron of the 'countryside', which might be compared to the old landowners' paternalistic attitude to their land and tenants.



Plate 18: Liberty and Livelihood March in London

6.2.5. The march in the media

The march enjoyed a tremendous amount of media coverage for over two weeks before and after the actual event, which clearly showed how much interest the countryside could rouse in Britain. Whatever newspaper one read and regardless of one's political stance, it was impossible to escape from the 'countryside' issue altogether during this period. Although the angle and tone regarding the issue varied from paper to paper, the same kind of comment came up again and again in almost every single report on the issue:

- People from outside do not really understand what it [hunting] is all about (publican: *The Guardian* 19/9/2002)
- People in town don't understand that living in the countryside is a way of life (gamekeeper: *The Times* 21/9/2002)
- Even though I live in the city I support the country way of life ... I think there are too many people from the city trying to run the countryside. Especially as they know nothing about it (publisher: *The Daily Telegraph* 23/9/2002)

The 'countryside', regardless of the background of those who made the comments, was always described as if it were an independent and totally distinct entity governed by its own rules which could not be understood by 'outsiders'. These rules were described by the term 'way of life', without any particular definition.

The prevailing tone of the coverage was that of crisis. Article after article reported sorry tales in rural areas. The countryside was in crisis. The country way of life was threatened with eradication. *The Daily Mail*, an unashamedly populist right-wing tabloid, issued a colour poster for the march. Superimposed on the idyllic landscape were large red letters spelling out 'SAVE OUR COUNTRYSIDE' (17/9/2003). The poster turned out to be very popular, and was put in the shop window in Colwall. The paper claimed on its front page¹⁵⁷:

¹⁵⁷ *The Mail* knew that hunting was a rather divisive topic, which certainly put off most of their urban readers, but when it was paraphrased as the countryside and the 'way of life' then they could safely expect to receive huge support for the campaign. It urged its readers to join the march not in support of hunting but in support of the 'countryside'. In its reporting, the paper mentioned rural poverty and the struggling sector of the farming industry, namely livestock farms. But interestingly enough, in the countryside poster there was not a single person. The image selected by *the Mail* was an old picture of Snowhill, a Cotswold village. In the foreground was a flock of sheep lazily grazing on the hill; down in the centre, a village of honey-coloured Cotswold-stone buildings lay sleepily surrounded by mature trees; beyond the village spread rolling hills and a hazy long view of the Severn plain to the horizon. Another picture the paper used was of a herd of inquisitive beef cattle looking at the camera lens with a background of rolling fields divided by hedges. There is no sign of poverty but simply an attractive

The Daily Mail carried no torch for fox-hunting, but it DOES believe the countryside is in crisis ... and urges you to support Sunday's march (17/9/2002).

The Liberty and Livelihood march was dominated by this palpable sense of impending crisis¹⁵⁸, which had a convincing urgency especially after people had been bombarded by apocalyptic images of the countryside during the foot and mouth epidemic. Day after day people saw the images of charred bodies of cattle piled upside down in the bleak fields with a background of ominous smoke. The army was mobilised, and people in protected clothing which looked like white spacesuits visited farms to slaughter animals. Straw and mats soaked with disinfectant were placed at every entrance. For more than half the year, rural areas were literally shot down. Movement not only of stock but also of humans was severely restricted and monitored both officially and privately. People heard endless sorry tales of the farmers' plague. The powerful background was to events aptly exploited and amplified by the hunting lobby. They succeeded in draw parallels between their situation and that of the cornered livestock farmers¹⁵⁹.

village, beautiful landscape and lovely farm animals. This peculiar combination of the dire description of the diligent but poor farmers, who were supposed to endure their disappearing 'way of life', and the beautiful visual image of the rural idyll was what their readers wanted to read about.

¹⁵⁸ However this discourse of crisis is nothing new. The dominant discourse surrounding the English countryside has been tinged with a tone of crisis for the past 150 years (Bunce 1994). It emerged in the late 19th century and reached its first peak in the interwar period when the ribbon development encroached in the countryside, and led to the creation of the powerful country lobbies, such as the CPRE, the Council for Preservation (later Protection) of Rural England. Then, in the 1970s and 1980s, when intensive farming altered the landscape dramatically in some parts of the country, another crisis loomed. The latest peak started in the 1990s with BSE, which hit livestock farms badly. Whether actual lives in rural areas in general have been in crisis or not is another story. The point is that the countryside has been represented as being threatened by crisis.

¹⁵⁹ In a leaked letter to the Prime Minister, the Prince of Wales, who is one of the largest landowners and a well-known hunting enthusiast, likened country people to ethnic minorities (*The Mail on Sunday* 22/9/2003). In the letter he quoted the words of a Cumbrian farmer:

if we, as a group, were black or gay, we would not be victimised or picked upon

Of course this is not a fair comparison. However, it was welcomed on the march. Some of the placards were based on this quart:

We will not be culturally cleansed
Mr. Blair, see what a minority looks like
Countryside not Countrycide.

Yasmin Alibhai-Brown replied in her usual trenchant tone (*The Independent* 23/9/2003):

May we not speculate that the march is in truth making a stand for the kind of country this was

Although no one denied that some people in the countryside were in serious trouble, which was why all the papers carried feature articles to highlight rural misery, there were stark differences among newspapers in their ways of describing the march. *The Daily Telegraph*, a conservative paper which is arguably the most popular national paper in rural areas, made a statement on the issue in its leader column (21/9/2003). It first established that the march was organised by a particular section of the rural population in order to protect their activity, without defining who they were:

Those who value the liberty to hunt and the livelihoods related to the sport have combined to resist what they see as an oppressive and ill-informed attack on them ...

Later it denied the 'general' image of those who pursue hunting:

Most Labour MPs still seem to inhabit a fantasy countryside in which rich and brutal farmers deprive 'the people' of their land and ride down innocent ramblers with their horses ...

Rich and brutal farmers are probably not in people's minds when they hear about the topic of hunting, but the paper continued:

If Labour wants the One Nation party ... it must stretch out to include the 80 per cent of the land mass of that nation which is not urban.

Again it refused to identify those who own the '80 per cent' of the land mass¹⁶⁰. The majority of them are not 'farmers' in any practical sense. 31.6 per cent of the land is still owned by about 200 aristocratic families, for instance, who are in many cases the core of the hunting 'community' (Shoard 1997: 97). Without mentioning this section of the society, which had organised the march, the paper presented a 'community' united despite its 'members'' varied interests.

before all of us darkies arrived?

The answer would be yes and no. Yes, this can be interpreted as the language of the exclusionist, but it is not just ethnic minorities being excluded, they are only part of the threat which comes from 'outside' to destroy the 'way of life'.

¹⁶⁰ UK acreage is around 60 million in total, occupied by around 59 million people, out of which 40 million acres are considered to be the 'countryside'. The countryside does not include mountains, moors, forests, water, roads, or industrial land, which account for somewhere between 12 and 14.5 million acres. The 40 million acres are owned by just 189,000 families, and estates over 247 acres, which are owned by some of the 189,000 families, account for around 28 million acres (Cahill 2001: 6).

Why is this happening on such a scale? Because it is not only about hunting ... It is also about the issues raised by a hunting ban and by the attitudes behind such legislation which apply to farming and rural jobs and rural services and small businesses and shooting and fishing and rambling and land ownership and housing and tradition and freedom ... The march includes ... a ragbag of causes. But it is held together by a remarkable solidarity. The sense of community is something whose lack in modern Britain everyone laments.

To sum up, *The Telegraph* represented the march as a demonstration of a solidly united but unfairly oppressed rural 'community' desperate to make their voices heard. It also defended hunting as a harmless recreational activity practised by a minority which was put under unreasonable pressure from the 'intolerant' majority. The same picture of a united community was also presented in the leader column of *The Mail on Sunday* (22/9/2003).

rich and poor in the countryside are united in support of a way of life they love and which they do not wish to see swept away by the class-prejudiced spite of ignorant urbanite levellers

In this version, the 'community' consisted of people of different means, but they were united because of a shared 'way of life'.

The leader column of *The Guardian*, a liberal paper which is not always available in shops in rural areas, presented a completely different interpretation of the march (21/9/2003). It showed sympathy for those who would march for various hardships they had suffered, but then stated:

But for all that, the cry for Liberty and Livelihood is being made in undeniably plummy tones. Voices that have never previously been raised on behalf of minority rights are expressing outrage that the powers of the state should be directed against them. Threats of law-breaking, in *the Spectator* and from the likes of the Duke of Devonshire, only encourage the sense that the march is driven by resentment among people who still own the countryside but no longer run the country.

It claimed that the true nature of the march was about class, and all the serious social issues were exploited as a cover by the landed class to save their beloved recreational activity. The paper's leading columnist, Polly Toynbee, had also argued that the march was about politics and class (20/9/2003). She wrote:

They [the Countryside Alliance] are Tories on the march, outraged and uncomprehending at how Labour holds power while they own the land.

She focused on the land issue as the root cause of this emotionally charged debate over hunting.

Sentimentality and class hatred are not good enough reasons, enjoyable though class war can be. If

only it was war over something that mattered such as robust taxing of incomes over £ 100,000 and an inheritance tax to sting the great estates and distribute land to the National Trust.the landed toffs who run the Countryside Alliance are the same people who fought against the right to roam, still strictly limiting access.

Her column was countered by Max Hastings, who used to edit *The Telegraph*, in his column in *The Daily Mail* (21/9/2003). He went straight into a defence of the current form of land ownership in an indirect and subtle way.

the people who live in the green places have done a pretty good job for the rest of us. It is not governments and public bodies which shape and maintain the countryside. It is the people who own and work upon the land.

He called 'the people' 'the stewards of the countryside', and repeated his defence in the last paragraph, again in a subtle manner.

In rural England, we have inherited a peerless legacy from our forefathers. For the future, as in the past, the best custodians of our countryside are the people who live in it, not those who wish to rebuild it from the dank corridors of Westminster.

In both essays which were written to discuss the march, the real moot point was not hunting but land ownership in the countryside and the power to control the land. While Toynbee made it explicit and related it to the class system, Hastings dealt with it in a subtle way and presented the image of 'community', as if it owned the land.

Regardless of their political and ideological stance towards the march, the media coverage of the actual march was characterised by its universal emphasis on the diversity of the reasons 400,000 demonstrators came to London from all over the country. People joined the march for various reasons: from support for hunting to a gesture of sympathy to farmers; from serious protest to a jolly dayout. Some came to save their village shops, others came to stop development, yet another called for more affordable houses. All the papers carried comments made by the demonstrators to show this diversity; Alan Michael, the Rural Affairs minister, made a comment which appeared in all the papers:

I certainly don't want to dismiss either the scale or the feelings of the people who were on this march, but do have to ask the question: what's it all about? ... I believe there has been a muddle at the heart of today's march.

He was not the first person who asked the question. In 1998, when the Alliance organised the Countryside March, people asked, 'What exactly are you marching

for?’ However, it was this ‘muddle’ that attracted and mobilised more than a quarter of a million people in 1998 and 400,000 people on this occasion down to London from all over the country, from a wide range of social strata and occupations, and from all age groups. The muddle itself, of course, would not have gathered that number of people, but once it was packaged as ‘for the countryside’, things changed dramatically.

Although there would not have been any march without the powerful hunting lobby, if the hunting issue had not been at the forefront of the march, it would have attracted more than that number of people.

While reporting the diversity of the reasons people demonstrated in the march, the papers used the country vs. town issue to describe the march in their headlines:

Autumn leave: time out in London for 400,000 rural marchers, the day cross country came to town (*The Guardian*)

Country invades town in a show of force (*The Independent*)

Countryside will erupt if it is not heard, warns alliance (*The Daily Telegraph*)

It's livestock and two smoking barrels as country goes to town (*The Times*)

At the same time, they emphasised the presence of the establishment by featuring comments from dukes and earls and also by featuring exclusive clubs which ‘relaxed’ their rules to allow women and children as members’ guests to enter their premises to show a gesture of support for the march. The establishment is, needless to say, a synonym of the landed class.

Overall this coverage produced an image of a bounded entity within which people share the same values and beliefs despite the varied and sometimes conflicting interests they hold. It also gave the impression that the entity existed under the strong social and cultural influence of the landed class. Fox-hunting was presented as an icon of this social relationship, rather than as a simple outdoor recreational activity.

6.3. The Countryside as a Hegemonic Space

6.3.1. Hunting and land ownership

Throughout the debate over fox-hunting, it was frequently stressed by the hunting lobby that although hunting was a minority activity it was not an elite one. I heard this claim quite often from people in my field as well. I asked Richard, the owner of a nursery in Colwall who was a field sports enthusiast and a member of the Countryside Alliance, about this:

K: My image of hunting is that it is a very aristocratic sort of activity..

R: That again, you see, is the Labour Party in this country trying to promote that image, but in actual fact ... yes, traditional, we are now talking back in the 17th, 18th century, it would have been lords and squires who had ... that went on to the 19th century, by the time up to the 20th century, probably half of the people who went hunting were farmers. As years went by, more and more farmers owned their own land, because big estates were broken up, sold off. So by the time the end of the Second World War ... a certain amount of lords and ladies and colonels and majors and what have you who join hunting, but a lot of people are just ordinary working people, and it's more so today. In fact, many packs, several packs of hounds in Wales are run by miners. In Cumbria, the Lake District, they are all purely working people, factory workers, farmers, farm workers. So, it's quite wrong to think of it as just aristocratic

He told me that it was quite natural for anyone who was brought up in the country to take up hunting:

K: You mentioned that you were an enthusiastic hunter. When did you take up hunting? And why?

R: I started, I imagine I was about 10, a long time ago now. I don't know really, I don't know why, quite honestly, I suppose sort of the whole thing you're out in the countryside and ...

K: Was it common for a 10-year-old boy?

R: Oh, yes, yes, and girls, too. I didn't ride in those days. I didn't ride until much later on, I just stayed on my feet and watched what other people were doing. ... lots of interesting things, hounds working and horses jumping, all that sort of things.

Here he talked about following a hunt as opposed to mounting a horse, which was quite a common activity for rural children. Many farmers told me that they used to follow the hunt when they were children, but few of them rode a horse. To own and maintain a horse is quite an expensive job, even when one does not own one's own paddock. Although it is common to see quite a few children, mainly girls, mounting horses in a hunt, it was highly unlikely that they were daughters of tenant farmers or factory workers. Nevertheless, regardless of the way they associated themselves with hunting, those children nurtured a familiarity with the sport. A woman who used to hunt when she was a child told me that she would have opposed hunting if she had

been brought up in the town. A hunt I followed, which was originally created as a private hunt by a member of the local gentry, did not consist of any aristocrats or gentry but of middle-class owner-occupier farmers, doctors, accountants, agricultural engineers and so on. In other words, the members of the hunt were not elite in terms of their blue-bloodness, but they were respected members of the locality. In this sense, the Alliance's claim that the majority of hunt members are not toffs but 'ordinary' people is not entirely misleading. The majority of the members of a hunt do not own a substantial area of land.

These hunt members may not have been born and brought up in the locality, but they do have close contact with local landowners and farmers whose land they hunt on, and they are willing to accept the social structure and relationship that is based on owning or working on the land. They also know the boundaries of the land very well, which few in-migrants would be aware of. In this sense, although the hunt may not actually include the landed class in its members, it has an inseparable relationship with the private ownership of the land. When I asked where exactly people go hunting, Richard replied:

They go hunting on land which is owned by farmers or landowners. You have to get their permission first of all. So, you have a set area for each day. ... I used to go all over the country one time ... the last area of English countryside which you wouldn't normally, ordinary people wouldn't see them, because [there is no] footpath, but when you're going hunting, you don't have to stay on the footpath.

In England, hunting is actually horse riding. To catch a fox can be the climax of the activity, but it may not be the main purpose. It is quite common not to catch or even to see a single fox for the entire day. What those taking part enjoy is to ride horses freely in open country, which is actually private property, following a pack of hounds. They can only conduct this activity with the permission of landowners who are in many cases members of a hunt themselves. To put this another way, hunting also functions to display the private ownership of land which otherwise just exists as an agricultural space. It is a privilege to have access to and to 'play' in such a space.

No matter how strongly the hunting lobby denies the aristocratic connotations of hunting¹⁶¹, it is almost impossible to erase the image¹⁶². Hunting in

¹⁶¹ In a national poster campaign launched in June 2003, the Countryside Alliance featured young

England often functions as a sign of the establishment or the rural landed class. Their strictly observed dress code of pink jackets, white breeches, black riding boots and caps reminds people of nothing but the landed class. Their dress and horses are a conspicuous display of wealth and status in rural areas. Whether the display actually reflects the reality or not is another matter, but it certainly conjures up the image of rural establishment. Today's hunters may not actually be landowners, but many of them are still respectable and influential members of the locality or children of such people¹⁶³. And just like in bygone days when a hunt meeting was an indispensable

female hunters who work in the public sectors, such as a nurse, a teacher and a social worker, as 'typical' members of hunting nowadays.

¹⁶² Hunting in England has always had noble connotations; it was started as an exclusively royal activity by the Normans who reserved vast areas of the newly conquered country exclusively for hunting. Incidentally, the eastern side of the Malvern Hills had been one of the royal forests and was later given to an aristocrat; its status changed to a chase which is an area reserved for hunting for non-royals. Most of the western side of the hills was also reserved for hunting for the Bishop of Hereford. The act of hunting was a conspicuous display of power and control of the land. This royal privilege has been gradually extended to aristocrats and then to landowners in general. The original style of hunting was stag hunting, imported from France. However, in the course of time, the original main game of deer was replaced by the fox, due to its decreasing number partly caused by deforestation and land 'improvement', which destroyed deer habitats. During the 18th century along with the rise of landed interests, fox hunting became a synonym for the rural landed class, since it had become an indispensable part of life for the rural gentry and squires. The activity was carried out on their own land which was the very source of their wealth and power. It provided not only a chance to display their power and status but also an occasion for the local establishment to mix together as a group. They developed their own 'culture', or codes of conduct, language and dress (Carr 1976, Ridley 1990, Thompson 1963: 144-150).

¹⁶³ In his study of hobbies and tastes as cultural and symbolic goods to distinguish social differences, Pierre Bourdieu enumerated the features of sports which appeal to the dominant class. Those sports:

- are practised in exclusive places
- are practised at the time one chooses
- are practised alone or with chosen partners
- demand relatively low physical exertion
- demand a relatively high investment of time and learning
- give rise to highly ritualised competitions governed by the unwritten laws of fair play
- take on the air of a highly controlled social exchange (1986: 215-17)

With a few exceptions, most of these features are found in hunting. In other words, to practice hunting can be regarded as a way to distinguish oneself as a member of the dominant group. Hunting is not just another outdoor recreational activity. In addition to the basics of the financial ability to own a horse and the physical ability to ride it, it also requires a particular social manner which needs to be nurtured over a certain period of time. One has to be acknowledged and accepted by the relatively exclusive group of the hunt in order to practice it. To put it another way, it is one's symbolic capital to practice hunting or to be a member of a hunt. It has long been a 'tradition' among the established landed class to introduce their offspring to hunting, but there is a strong tendency among the newly established families in rural areas to encourage their children to take up the field sport while they themselves start practising another field sport, shooting, which does not require such formality and skill, acquired over a long period of time, as hunting does. In a sense, it is a way for them to 'enhance' their social status, which simultaneously reinforces the symbolic social value of such activities as the recognition of their

winter socialising opportunity among the rural establishment, it still provides a good opportunity for those who share the same ideal of rurality to get together.

Just as the hunting lobby repeatedly claims that hunting is a way of life, it is not regarded as just another outdoor recreational activity which can be put in the same category as cycling or canoeing. To take up hunting is to adopt a particular form of values and beliefs which have been formed by the landed class. In other words, regardless of one's actual status in society, to join, or even just to express support for, a hunt is in practice to make a personal endorsement of such values and beliefs which are actually an ethos of the landed interests. At the heart of this ethos is a strong belief in private ownership of land and autonomy in one's private space. As Richard pointed out, after the dissolution of large estates¹⁶⁴, ownership of rural land had been shifted to owner occupier farmers¹⁶⁵, but those farmers inherited some of their predecessors' attitudes. In addition to the enthusiasm for hunting¹⁶⁶, they inherited a particular type of the ideology of property, or strong will to control their own land, which can be paraphrased as a desire to have autonomy in their own land¹⁶⁷ (Cox et al. 1988: 324). In a sense, this desire has been strengthened by farmers, who tend to regard the countryside as their exclusive working units. People who support hunting, even those who do not possess land, tend to express their belief in private land ownership and the right of landowners to control their own land.

distinction (Bourdieu 1984: 251). However, while Bourdieu analyses hobbies and tastes as symbolic capital possessed and competed for by social classes to distinguish themselves from others, hunting in the English countryside involves something else. There is no doubt that the class element plays a significant part in hunting. However, it is not always a divisive factor, but in some cases provides an opportunity to integrate people belonging to different classes. To understand this integral factor of hunting, one has to pay attention to the space in which hunting is practised and the social relationship maintained in the space. Such an analysis explains the reason why the hunting lobby was able to replace the hunting issue with the wider topic of the countryside issue in an apparently smooth and effortless way.

¹⁶⁴ The decline of estates was triggered by the long agricultural depression from 1873 to 1914, which was accelerated by Lloyd George's tax reformation and the First World War (Newby 1979: 36-9).

¹⁶⁵ In the early 1980s, 60% to 65% of UK agricultural land was owned by farmers (Blunden and Curry 1985: 45).

¹⁶⁶ In their study of two stag hunts in Devon and Somerset, Cox et al. found out that more than 40 % of their subscribers were farmers (1994: 198-9).

¹⁶⁷ On the other hand, Cox et al. pointed out from their study of the Country Landowners Association (CLA) and the National Farmers' Union (NFU) that while the CLA has always been interested in conservation issues, the NFU had paid little attention to the conservation aspect of land management until quite recently (1988: 329).

6.3.2. Hegemony, tradition and landownership

(The notion of hegemony)

I would like to introduce the notion of hegemony here to understand the nature of the discourses surrounding hunting and the countryside debate¹⁶⁸. Hegemony can be explained as a state of domination and subordination which is perceived as 'natural' for both the dominants and the subordinates. Hegemonic domination is in sharp contrast to domination sustained by forces in which the subordinates are coerced to adopt their social position against their will. In hegemonic domination, the subordinates take their social position and conditions voluntarily. They accept and even support the authority and privileges of the dominants as something appropriate and desirable. Gramsci explained this peculiar mechanism of hegemony as a cultural process that creates a world view in which the domination is presented as a 'natural' reality. The process convinces people of the domination and interests of a particular group by creating and maintaining a system of meanings, values and beliefs which justify such a state.

Raymond Williams related another notion of tradition to this notion of hegemony. He identified cultural tradition and practice as the basic process of the formation of social and economic structure, which is 'the most powerful practical means of incorporation' (1977: 111,113). He also stressed the selective nature of 'tradition', that is, tradition does not consist of coincidentally remaining segments of the past but 'an intentionally selective version of a shaping past and a preshaped present' to serve the interests of a particular group or ideology (op. cit: 115). Presented as tradition, particular socio-cultural practices and conditions ratify a particular contemporary order. In other words, tradition is the very cultural practice which lays a foundation for hegemonic order.

People come to accept an existing hegemonic order not by coercion but by being exposed to tradition which is presented as something respectable that appears to endure for a long time because of its values and significance. As Williams pointed out, 'the true condition of hegemony is effective self-identification with the hegemonic forms' (op. cit.: 118), and so a hegemonic order is sustained through the

¹⁶⁸ The notion was developed by the Italian Marxist thinker Antonio Gramsci (1970), who became

voluntary internalisation of the order by all the people involved. To achieve this purpose, tradition cannot be a simple manifestation of a particular interest or ideology which should be embedded within apparently unrelated everyday practices. Conducting the practices, and seeing such conduct as desirable, functions to endorse the interest and ideology. Tradition also proliferates in an idealised form through various representations, such as literature and pictures. Through this representational space, the hegemonic order can reach beyond the space and people it has controlled.

Williams also stressed that hegemony is not a static system but a dynamic process which includes counter-elements against the currently dominant order. He introduced the concept of counter-hegemony as a potential order to subvert the dominant one (op. cit.: 112-3). From the viewpoint of counter-hegemony, tradition, which supports the dominant hegemony, can be regarded as a 'residual' or 'marginal' remnant of the past which should be dismissed as 'out of date' or 'nostalgic' (op. cit.: 116).

These notions of hegemony, tradition and counter-hegemony shed light on the hunting issues, or more generally on the space called the countryside. Hunting has been formed and performed under the strong influence, leadership and interest of the landed class. It is true that it has not been exclusively practised by the landed class but it has included a much wider population in rural areas, or at least this used to be the case. It provided rare opportunities for many foot followers to witness a spectacle in rural areas. Social historian F. M. L. Thompson pointed out:

In the nineteenth century, it was an increasingly organised activity, with a growing body of conventions and etiquette, which gave the hunting community a mystique and cohesion of its own. An expensive activity, the major part of the expense was frequently carried by a member of the aristocracy, whose enthusiasm for the chase was in this way the means of cementing his leadership of all branches of county society. The hunting interest, based on common memories of frustration, disappointment and exhaustion as well as achievement, informed by respect and admiration for a great Master, was perhaps the most real and fundamentally influential element in county society. The brotherhood reached far beyond the loyalties bred by estates, and embraced men from a great many stations in life, for alongside the lord, the squire and the parson, the farmer, the doctor, the solicitor and even the village sweep could all be seen at the meet ... As loyalties founded on emotions outran the calculus of economic interests, so the fox did more for the unity and strength of the landed interest than rent roll ... (1963: 144).

influential in the English-speaking world after Raymond Williams' introduction (1977: 108-14).

However, the values and belief of the landed interests are inevitably deeply inscribed in the practice. And, of course, the core belief of the landed class is the private ownership of the land and the owners' right to exercise control over their land. The modern English historian Avner Offer, in his study of property of politics, presented three conceptions of property available at the turn of the 20th century (1981: 1-4):

1. Natural rights model:
the idea that land is humanity's common heritage, which was expressed by Rousseau in *The Social Contract and Discourses*
2. Utilitarian model:
the idea that land ultimately belongs to the state, which was expressed by Jeremy Bentham in *Principles of the Civil Code*. The land can be acquired by individuals but it depends on the sanction of the law and the pleasure of the state.
3. Aristocratic-legal tradition model:
the idea that land belongs to private owners, which was the ethos of the landed interests.

Offer pointed out that the aristocratic-legal model is not so much a theory as 'a set of institutions and a code of practices, attitudes and habits' embedded in the culture of the landed class (op. cit.: 3). In other words, this type of property thinking is embodied in various cultural practices associated with the landed class. Needless to say hunting, which is an essential part of the country house culture developed by the landed class, has been one of the central practices to demonstrate the idea. The essence of the country house culture is to display wealth and power in the form of property and all the activities associated with it. The country estate for the landed class is not only an economic investment. In fact, the landed class has funded 'improvement' to their country property with profits gained from other sources (Daniels 1993: 80).

Some of the "improvements" have been carried out for agricultural reasons but others simply for pleasure and to show off. To put it another way, the land is not there merely as a source of economic gain but also, or perhaps more so, as the source of personal pleasure and prestige. A landscape garden, in the middle of which a country house is placed, is a good example, and blood sports are also good examples of using land for pleasure. While landscape gardens are mainly for visual and aesthetic pleasure, blood sports are for a more active and palpable enjoyment of one's own property. Hunting in particular requires a large area of disposable land in which

hunters can ride horses freely, which is a highly effective demonstration of their power and control over the land. The leadership adopted by the landed class in organising a hunt, which is characterised by all the formality and rituals, enhances their authority. In this way, the activity covertly endorses the ideology of private land ownership.

However, hunting does not provide enjoyment only for mounted hunters, but also for people who follow the hunt. In other words, those who cannot afford to own horses can still enjoy it as spectators, and hunting has provided a spectacle for ordinary country residents. Although its relationship with farmers has not always been smooth, but has depended on the regional characteristics of farming, the dominant type of landholdings and the general climate of the farming industry since the late 19th century, and especially after the Second World War, when the majority of farmers became owner-occupiers with prosperity guaranteed by state subsidies, more and more farmers took up hunting as a respectable hobby. While these farmers increased their influence on a hunt by becoming members of the hunt committee, through which they increased their control over their newly acquired land, they also adopted the hunting 'culture' in its entirety ¹⁶⁹ (Ridley 1990: 14-16, 39-42, 84-100, 136, 151-2, 160, 173-5). In other words, regardless of the form, as a spectator or as a practitioner, the rural population has adopted the values and beliefs of the landed class even in places where such people have lost their actual power.

All the practices related to hunting became 'tradition', a fact that is repeatedly stressed by the pro-hunt lobby. Being labelled as a 'traditional' practice, hunting gains another legitimacy of its existence in addition to its link to the establishment. Furthermore, hunting as tradition has a double meaning. It is perceived as and claimed to be a farming tradition as well as an aristocratic tradition. Because of the increased number of farmers involved in hunting, it became considered as an integral part of 'traditional' farming practices. Although this

¹⁶⁹ Just like the popular caricature Farmer Palmer who shouts 'Get off my land' at anyone coming near his land, farmers tend to hold a strong belief in private land ownership and owners' power to control their own land (cf Newby 1979: 212). During hunting debates, in which farmers tend to take the side of the pro-hunt lobby even when they do not practise hunting, farmers often question why they have to be told what they should do on their own land.

assumption is not based on fact¹⁷⁰, together with the general nostalgia projected toward old agrarian practices and rural life, hunting became an object of the sentimental desire to preserve. It became part of the idea of 'the working countryside', which in a sense added value to the practice.

In this complex course of development, farmers had adopted the landed class's ideal of private property and the power represented by the possession of land along with some of their habits that overtly or covertly express such an ideal and power. In this way, two historically prominent rural residents came to share the same practice and values. Furthermore, as part of the same process, other people, possessing little land or living outside the social relationship which was based on land ownership, were also assimilated into the landed 'culture' either by being attracted to the established order and power or as a sign of sentimental identification with the rural idyll in which the farming 'tradition' is perceived to be an 'authentic' form of living in the countryside. In other words, this process of the diffusion of hunting was also a process to build up, strengthen and maintain a hegemonic order in rural areas, at the top of which the landed class resides. The countryside as a hegemonic space is at work here.

This is why the Liberty and Livelihood march succeeded in mobilising such a lot of people. It was highlighted both in the media coverage and by the organiser that people from all backgrounds and age groups had gathered to demonstrate their desire to 'protect' the countryside. At the same time, the liberal papers pointed out the lack of unity among the marchers in terms of their demands. The march was dismissed for its 'vagueness' and the marchers were regarded as a crowd without a clear integrated aim. This claim appears to be correct since the demands of marchers ranged from the obvious survival of hunting to the rectification of rural social problems. However, the liberal media may have missed the point of the apparently disintegrated crowd of 400,000 people coming down to London from all over the

¹⁷⁰ From the farmers' point of view, foxes are pests to be wiped out, but hunters have treated them as game to be preserved. These opposing views lead them into conflict. The landed class used various tactics to persuade farmers not to kill foxes, which included manipulating the conditions of land tenure, encouraging farmers to take up hunting, and making fox killing taboo. In addition to these different views about the animal, especially in arable country, hounds and horses do damage to crops. To prevent this damage, some farmers put up fences and barbed wire (Ridley do.).

country.

This 'confusion' was partly caused by the organisers' tactics of appealing to wider issues than hunting. These tactics revived the old landed class's tradition of paternalism by which they looked after, both directly and indirectly the well-being of people who were under their control (cf Thompson 1963: 16-17, 133-4, 210). Needless to say, the paternalistic practices were adopted by the landed class in order to maintain their hegemony in rural areas. Although the organisation itself denies it, there is no doubt that the core of the Countryside Alliance, the organiser of the march, is the landed interest which wants to keep hunting legal. All the institutions which, moderately or ostentatiously, displayed their support for the Alliance, which included the royal family, the House of Lords, the Conservative Party and gentlemen's clubs, revealed this core. The Alliance started to address broader rural issues, such as employment, small businesses, traffic and housing, in addition to hunting, and re-invented itself as 'an authoritative voice of the countryside' to gain more support. By making itself a self-appointed 'spokesman' of the countryside, the landed class succeeded in maintaining their hegemonic position. The 400,000 people who came to the march effectively endorsed and demonstrated their hegemonic authority.

As we have seen, one of the dominant discourses expressed by the participants of the march was that which represented the countryside as an enclosed entity functioning with its own mechanism. It was also repeatedly claimed that the countryside had its own 'tradition' and 'way of life', which appeared as the principle governing the entity. And, as Williams pointed out, these rather vaguely defined notions of 'tradition' and 'way of life' are, in fact, the basis of the formation of a particular mode of social and economic structure, or a particular hegemonic order.

Another dominant discourse of the march was the discourse of crisis. The countryside was claimed to be in crisis. This claim apparently referred mainly to the series of agricultural disasters. However, uttered in the context of the proposed ban on hunting and with the discourse of the enclosed entity, the crisis had a double meaning. Another crisis was that of the current hegemonic order in the space. There were countless comments on the 'outside interference' in the countryside.

· Those who govern want to regulate every aspect of country life, to control and interfere without so

much as a thought to the consequences (Ian Duncan Smith, then Conservative leader, *The Sunday Telegraph* 22/9/2002)

· There are no countrymen in the cabinet and liberty is being eroded everywhere for country people - we don't want any more laws, we want fewer (Duchess of Devonshire, *The Daily Telegraph* 23/9/2002)

These are the voices of the establishment, but, as we have seen, the same claim came from all quarters. The march can, in effect, be regarded as an outcry over the existing hegemonic order and its principal ideology of private property. In other words, it was an outcry over the control of the space called the countryside. Although the march was organised by those who had a vested interest, it mobilised those who did not have such an interest but merely believed in the righteousness and legitimacy of the existing order which was perceived and represented as 'tradition' or the 'country way of life'. The highlighted issue of hunting provided the momentum to burst the accumulated feeling that the order was being eroded. This is why so much antagonism was expressed against 'outside forces', which forced a change in the way the space was managed and order was subsequently undermined. In the last section, I shall examine the idea of stewardship as a compromise to deal with this clash between the existing order for managing the space and the 'outside forces' which do not accept it.

6.3.3. The idea of stewardship

So far in this chapter we have examined the perception of the countryside in the context of the impending ban on hunting with dogs in England and Wales. In so doing we heard the voices of the locals, especially those of the established members of the community, on their understanding of the space called the countryside. Although there is no one dominant understanding, some see it as a site of production while others see it as a kind of art; to put it crudely, the countryside in their mind is a space consisting of private properties which belong to particular individuals who retain the power to control them. This view of the countryside as a collection of private properties is held both by those who actually own land and by those who do not. This ideology of private property or exclusive possession of land is justified and demonstrated by another socio-cultural process of 'tradition' in addition to the more formal legal guarantee and protection. Being associated with 'tradition', this

particular ideology has acquired a legitimacy which has a power to attract and subordinate those who do not derive any actual benefit out of the ideology. In this way, hegemony is constructed in a certain space.

However, there are those who are not entirely subordinated to such an ideology. Those people who move into the hegemonic space from 'outside' as non-landowners, or those who live 'outside' and have little to do with the space, tend to have another understanding of land in the countryside.

Fred is a retired civil engineer who is now an active member of several local voluntary organisations. He moved into the western side of the Malvern Hills 15 years ago after his retirement. He is also a keen walker, which was one of the main reasons he and his wife chose Malvern as a place to retire in. He joined a local footpath society, which is an affiliate organisation to the Ramblers Association, and has been involved with monitoring the conditions of the local footpath network. When we talked, he told me about a conflict with which he was involved. He and his party bumped into a shooting party while they walked on a public right of way. The owner of the land told them to move off his land and threatened them by shooting his gun in the air and to the ground. A court case ensued and the landowner was found guilty. Naturally, Fred did not have a good opinion of landowners.

they are a group of people who feel they own the land and ... I feel quite strongly that the land is a thing which can't be owned. They could be stewards, people who look after it. But most of them, I think, are fairly unsympathetic to walkers. They feel [walkers] trespass on their land.

Here he expressed a different notion of property, that of Rousseau's property as a natural rights model, that is, the land as humanity's common heritage. As we saw in Chapter 5 this notion was also expressed by the chairman of the Colwall Village Society. Neither of them, of course, actually believes in the notion in its pure form. The chairman dismissed her own idea as 'silly' and Fred later told me that the right of way was the only effective way for landowners to control access. However, as a sentiment this is a fairly common belief held informally by those who were not born and brought up in the hegemonic space. Although this ideal does not naturally fit in with the hard reality of the countryside as it is, it has been encroaching into the dominant understanding of land ownership in the countryside. It takes the form of the notion of stewardship, which Fred expressed as his view of landowners.

The term and notion of stewardship in its current form emerged in the late 1980s and entered the popular lexicon after the government's introduction of the Countryside Stewardship Scheme (CSS). In this form, as Fred said, landowners and farmers are regarded as caretakers of the land they control for the general public rather than absolute owners. As far as the notional level is concerned, the land, or the countryside, is perceived as public property rather than as privately owned.

The spread of this notion coincided with the changing general perception of the countryside. The change in perception was caused by a combination of social, economic and environmental factors. The increase in concern for the environment in the 1970s prompted people to pay more attention to modern agricultural operations. At around the same time, full-scale counter-urbanisation began to be a significant social phenomenon, which has transplanted a sizeable number of people who did not have any background in the countryside. Moreover, recreational use of the countryside has steadily increased, which has coincided with the relative decline of agricultural industry in the national economy. British agriculture had reached the stage of over-production and the government started to discourage farmers from producing food. In short, the overwhelmingly dominant character of the countryside as a site of production was thrown into competition with another perception of the countryside as a site of consumption or amenity space. More and more people who do not have many links with 'tradition' or 'the country way of life' have had real contact with the space either as residents or as visitors.

The CSS was launched in 1991 as a pilot scheme under the control of the Countryside Commission. The initiative came from the Conservative government which was under pressure to address the environmental destruction caused by intensive farming, over-production of agricultural products, heavy subsidies encouraging such production and more access to the countryside for the general public. The scheme was launched to redress these environmental, economic and social problems (Bishop and Phillips 1993: 329-32, Parker 1996: 400-2). The CSS aims to integrate all the main activities, that is, farming, land management, conservation and recreation, in an environmentally sympathetic way (Countryside

Commission 1993b: 2-4). It is basically a payment scheme for farmers and landowners who agree to manage or re-create their properties in a way the general public will appreciate. In other words, it is an attempt to redirect part of the agricultural subsidies from a production incentive to a conservation and access incentive. The CSS sets four areas as its main target to maintain and 'improve': landscape, wildlife habitats, cultural remains and access. It encourages farmers and landowners to retain or return to traditional management practices. The scheme is in practice designed for public benefit or enjoyment of the countryside, so that the priority is given to the land visible by or accessible for them.

Thatcher's Conservative government started this scheme as a part of the integrated rural policy announced in its White Paper on the Environment in 1990 entitled *This Common Inheritance* (HM Government). Their policy was characterised by the Thatcherite strong belief in the market-based approach (Bishop and Phillips op. cit.: 317-19). Although the CSS did not rely on the market in the usual sense, it was strong demand from the public that made the government adopt the policy to conserve the landscape and to increase the opportunity for access to the countryside for recreational purposes. By providing payment for conservation and access, the government put a price tag on these activities, some of which have long been customarily practised. It was pointed out that the CSS was in effect the commodification of the countryside and customary practices (Parker op. cit.: 402). In other words, the CSS encourages farmers and landowners to produce a space itself for amenity purposes rather than to use the space for producing food. It was these demands from consumers, most of whom did not have a vested interest in the existing system and order, that moved the government to change the character and function of the space.

However, against this background, the Conservative government picked up the notion of stewardship in order to package the scheme. This notion is based on the traditional Tory paternalism articulated by Edmund Burke in his *Reflections on the French Revolution* (1790), which has long been held by the landed class (Newby et. al. 1978: 23-5, 332-3, Newby 1979: 69-71). Burke used this concept to defend the values, beliefs and the very existence of the established landed families against the

rising bourgeoisie in the historical context of the Industrial Revolution and the French Revolution. In this notion, or rhetoric, of stewardship, powerful landowners were likened to humble caretakers of properties which were presented as part of the national heritage. They were depicted as serving for the nation by looking after its heritage in the form of their private properties, which had been handed down for generation within the same family, rather than exploiting the land in order to make a profit out of it. Burke represented the landed class as the custodian of the heritage and elevated landowning to an act of morality and responsibility. However, in reality, this notion of stewardship was more appropriately applied to the family estate rather than to the national heritage. It is more often than not the expression of the belongingness to a family which has owned the property for a long time¹⁷¹. No matter how humble it may sound, the rhetoric of the steward was in reality a manifestation of power since what he was supposed to 'look after' was both his estate and those who depended on it (Woods 1997: 459-60). In other words, it was an expression of a particular hegemony.

Although this original interpretation of the notion of stewardship does not quite lose its influence, especially among traditional landowners, along with the decline of the political, economic and social influences of the landed class, the notion and term have lost their historically specific connotation of hegemony. By the time the Countryside Commission recycled the term 'stewardship' to name their new rural management scheme, the term has ceased to evoke any particular social structure among the general public. Whatever was the intention of the Commission in choosing this term, the public, especially those who have little knowledge of the rural

¹⁷¹ This strong emotional relationship between an estate and the landed class was pointed out by Marx:

the lord of an entailed estate, the first-born son, belongs to the land. It inherits him ... there still exists the semblance of a more intimate connection between the proprietor and the land than that of mere *material* wealth. The estate is individualised with its lord ... It appears as the inorganic body of its lord (1973: 100-1, cited in Newby et. al. op. cit: 332).

The same idea was expressed by a land agent for the Duke of Northumberland in 1982:

The actual fact of ownership is less important than the fact that they [landowners] feel that they are stewards, that they have been handed down to look after something for a very short number of years which they would hope to leave in a better state than when they took over (Shoard 1997: 400).

hegemonic order, took this as its literal meaning, which Fred clearly expressed. In these new circumstances, to be called a 'steward' is to be regarded as someone who takes care of property that rightly belongs to someone else.

Behind this shift in the dominant meaning of the term, there is a prevailing popular image of the countryside as a kind of national communal space, which has been constructed through various representational media since the 19th century (cf Bunce 1994, Williams 1973, Weiner 1981). The circulation of the image has further been accelerated by the consumer culture that found the image of the countryside a rich cultural resource to be exploited in order to add value to products on the market (Bunce op. cit: 68-76, Macnaghten and Urry 1998: 190-2, Thrift 1989). In this socially constructed image of the countryside, what is missing is the hegemonic order which used to rule the space and the fact that each tract of land is owned by certain individuals or organisations. Instead, the space has been presented as a kind of public space, which makes it easier for people to be associated to the space. The idea of stewardship held by the landed class itself contained an element which created such a view. They likened themselves to humble caretakers of property which was presented as belonging ultimately to the nation. This view was rather compatible with the popular image of the countryside which has been developed and circulated in the representational space. As a result, both private property ownership and the hegemonic order attached to the space became rather unsuitable, if not alien, ideas for most of the urban population, who consumed the image, to associate with the countryside.

However, part of the landed class's ideal of the space survived in this popular image of the countryside. One of the main functions of the country estate was to provide an amenity space either in the form of landscape to appreciate or for the recreational activity of field sports. Although the contents are not exactly the same, this idea of the countryside as an aesthetic and amenity space was inherited and appreciated in the popular image of the countryside. In other words, the spatial formation of the landed class was popularised through this process. It was at this point that the CSS was introduced. In addition to the aesthetic and recreational functions, the CSS expects the countryside to have another function, that of

depository. It encourages landowners and farmers to use 'traditional' methods to manage their land in order to provide habitats for wildlife. The countryside is expected to preserve 'tradition' and wildlife. These spatial functions of amenity and depository are what the public, or more precisely the urban middle-class, who were the dominant consumer of the countryside (Thrift 1989), expects the rural space to fulfil. There is no doubt that a series of agri-environmental schemes, such as the CSS, introduced by the government was partly prompted by the demand and expectation of the public (cf Cullingworth and Nadin 2002: 275-77).

The idea of stewardship is effective in finding a compromise between potentially conflicting expectations projected onto the same space by different groups of people. The traditional landowners like to regard themselves as temporary custodians rather than owners of their property, which belongs to their families. It is pointed out that the traditional landowners pay more attention to the conservation side of property management, which they regard as a moral duty (Newby 1979: 67-70, Newby et. al. 1978: 332-33). In other words, the role of countryside steward is something they have played for generations as their social duty. It was originally their idea to regard and treat the countryside as an amenity space which is now what the majority of the population, who do not possess land in the countryside, expect the space to be. As far as the ideal form of management of the space is concerned, there is a broad agreement between these two groups. The difference, of course, lies in what constitutes the ideal form of property ownership. While landowners believe in the aristocratic-legal tradition of absolute private ownership, the landless public tend to express a preference for the natural rights model of public ownership. The notion of stewardship bridges these polar opposites because of its double meaning. In other words, the potential conflict on the conceptual level of land ownership was blurred by the introduction of this ambiguous notion of stewardship.

However, it does not operate only on a perceptual level by creating an impression of public ownership of the space with the appropriation of the traditional landed class ideal. The idea of stewardship in its newly established terms after the introduction of the CSS brought practical differences as well. If ownership of the land is concerned with the control, benefit and alienation of the property (Newby

1979: 248), then the land managed under the CSS can be regarded as quasi-public property. In addition to the general planning control which applies to almost of all the property as restrictions¹⁷², those properties entering the CSS are under much stricter control. The CSS instructs how the land should be managed and how a certain landscape should be created or maintained, and in most cases they are required to ensure the access to the property so that the public can enjoy the result. In other words, even as a temporary state, three elements of land ownership are shared to some extent by the public.

Another main stakeholder of the space, the farmers, does not share the notion of this amenity and depository space as the ideal or appropriate spatial formation of the countryside. Nor do they appreciate the connotation of the notion of steward. They, especially hands-on farmers, tend to express contempt for the idea. However, they are at the same time quite practical and manage the land as a commercial operation. And while they are fearfully independent people, farming is ironically one of the most state-dependent industries in the modern world. It barely survives without receiving some kind of subsidy either from the government or from the EU. The farmers change the nature of their operation according to the subsidies available and the market¹⁷³. In other words, they may not appreciate stewardship as a notion or as a way to manage their property, but they accept it when it is economically viable. The agri-environmental schemes have become more and more attractive for small-to-minimum-scale farmers in the current severe agricultural depression. Whether they actually regard themselves as stewards or not is another story, but on a practical level, along with farming diversification principally for rural tourism, to take up stewardship, or to maintain or create amenity and depository space, for the public in exchange for payment has been established as an alternative way to manage their property as a viable economic choice¹⁷⁴.

¹⁷² Newby refers to the planners role as stewardship (1979: 247-9)

¹⁷³ These agri-environmental schemes were in practice introduced by the government to discourage farmers over-producing food by chasing after production subsidies provided by the EU as a part of the Common Agricultural Policy (Cox 1998: 14, 52-63).

¹⁷⁴ The CSS alone made 13,745 agreement (each agreement lasts 10 years) covering 343,132 hectares in England during the period 1992 to 2002 (www.defra.gov.uk/erdp/schemes/css/anniversary.htm).

I have interpreted the currently popular notion and practice of countryside stewardship as a compromise among those who hold conflicting ideals on the countryside. The countryside has long been organised under a particular hegemonic order and the space has been formed and managed according to the values and beliefs attached to that order. The order was not absolute or consolidated. It contained variants within it, some of which were expressed by my interviewees. There had always been conflicts among them over land management, notably between the amenity interests and the farming interests (see Redley 1990 on hunting and farming). However, those conflicts were dealt with within the existing social relationship and the shared livelihood. The hegemonic order based on private land ownership had not been seriously challenged¹⁷⁵. The change to the situation came with the 'outsiders' who do not agree with or accept the existing hegemonic order that sets principles for the spatial formation of the countryside.

Since the 1970s in particular, an increasing number of people who have an urban middle-class background have got directly involved with the rural space either as in-migrated residents or as holiday visitors. Although they do not form a homogenous group, as we have seen throughout this thesis, their expectations and understandings of the rural space are rather different from those held by people who were born and brought up in the space and therefore were caught up in the existing order. Unlike agricultural labourers who also held different values and beliefs from the dominant members of rural society in terms of property ownership, these new stakeholders of the rural space are highly vocal and they are able to confront the establishment. The contrast becomes especially clear when one considers the ideal forms of ownership and function of the land. I will not repeat the argument I have already examined in this section, but I do want to emphasise one more that the notion and practice of stewardship in its currently circulated form was established as a result

¹⁷⁵ Of the three notions of property ownership, the dominant aristocratic-legal tradition model which sanctified private ownership was not the only one; in addition there has always been the counter-notion of the natural-right model, which regards the land as a gift from God, and therefore no one can own it (Williams 1973: 41-3). The latter notion was naturally favoured by landless agricultural labourers who formed the majority of the rural population. On a practical level, the existence of common land realised this function to some extent. However, just as the sporadic protest against the enclosure which exterminated this quasi-communal space showed, the landless agricultural labourers were not serious contenders to undermine the hegemonic order (E. P. Thompson 1991: 240-1).

of the rising interest and involvement of the non-rural based population in the countryside. In a sense, their values and beliefs can be regarded as counter-hegemony when applied to the rural space, and the notion and practice of stewardship was adopted as a compromise, as result of competition between the established hegemony and the counter-hegemony to determine the way to manage the rural space they share¹⁷⁶.

¹⁷⁶ However, this compromise was not realised as a purely political or social agreement between the groups of people. As one of my friends clearly pointed out (see Chapter 5: n 146), the ownership of a piece of land in England has multiple identities. The various existing and potential usages, or more precisely rights to use these functions, can be owned by different parties. The actual practice of countryside stewardship is a payment scheme to conserve a particular piece of land. Here conservation is regarded as a separate land use and therefore a separate right is created (Cox et. al. 1988: 323-24). The public in practice pays the price for the right to conserve a particular piece of land.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

I began this project with the intention of criticising the mythically constructed relationship between people and place. As I wrote in the introduction, what was in my mind at the beginning was a national identity issue. My question at that time was how people internalise their national identity through a landscape which is widely regarded as a typical national image. I regarded place, or image of place, as something that restricts our possibilities, and wanted to reveal its artificiality. Being an intensely individual character, I always found such a restriction uncomfortable. Before setting out to begin my fieldwork I wrote a research proposal, which began with the following passage:

I take anthropology not as a way to understand 'others' by representing 'their' culture but as a means to obtain 'our' various possibilities. In other words, it is a way to emancipate an individual, at least on an epistemological level, from a certain restraint. That is 'my kind of anthropology'. As an apprentice of such a discipline, I am going to examine the relationship between people and place, that is, the way people are bound to a particular place. In so doing, I want to cut the imaginary ties which bind a group of people and their culture to a place, since with unifying to a place a group and culture tend to be substantialised, and as a result they intensify their binding force to an individual as their member.

I cannot help but remark how different my viewpoint is now. What I came across and learned in the field were persons' passions which connected them to a particular locality. This connection was not something given a priori but rather they consciously established it. To put it another way, the connection was not there to bind persons to some ideologically constructed entity. It was created by the persons to make their lives in a particular locality meaningful. I was impressed and fascinated by their passion. As a result, this final product of my project is written in a spirit of positive appraisal rather than negative denial of the connection between persons and place.

The French anthropologist Marc Augé, in his essay on the subject of European anthropology, advocated establishing contemporaneity as its main question of investigation (1995). He also suggested to anthropologists working in Europe that they should focus on the relationship between an individual and a culture. He then highlighted super-modernity as the most unique phenomenon of contemporaneity to

study. Spaces, such as supermarkets, airports, motorways and hotels, were raised as typical fields to consider this phenomenon. In these spaces of super-modernity, persons exist as anonymous individuals who are cut out from those matters, such as identity or relations or history, which determine persons in the conventional fields of anthropology. Augé called the space of super-modernity 'non-place', as an antithesis to the anthropological places in which persons were firmly tied to their identities, relations and history. These non-places are homogenous spaces which cannot be distinguished from each another, and in which persons are always in transition and never build up meaningful relationships with their surroundings. The surroundings exist purely for functional reasons and history is transformed into mere spectacles which are detached from persons' lives in non-places.

It is true that the vast majority of persons in the Western world no longer live in anthropological places. It has become normal for us to move from the locality where we were born and brought up and to settle down somewhere else for various reasons. Some may keep ties with the place they come from but that is not always the case. It is also true that we spend more and more time in 'non-places' where we are detached from our environment. We are already used to these non-places. These uniform standardised spaces are 'safe', since everything is arranged in a predictable way regardless of their actual locations. This peculiar sense of security makes us comfortable about staying in such a space. It does not really matter whether it is in Britain or in Japan since most of the historical and social contexts are removed, although they can be recycled for ornamental purposes, in order to give priority to satisfying customers' immediate desires. In non-places, everyone is treated equally as a customer with no background¹⁷⁷. In this sense, Augé is right to highlight these non-spaces since they are the spaces which reflect the most peculiar nature of the society, or the late capitalist consumer society to be more precise, we live in.

However, it is rather a hasty move to jump from anthropological places to non-places all at once, and it is misleading to represent non-places as the only

¹⁷⁷ It is interesting that although Augé urged the anthropologists of Europe to pay more attention to the relationship between an individual and culture after criticising an anthropological illusion of culture in which persons', who actually hold various different positions there, individualities are screened out and replaced with a collective personality, in these non-spaces the highlighted 'individuals' are ironically mutually indistinguishable customers.

contemporary alternative of anthropological places, as if persons in the contemporary Western world have lost their interest in and connections to their surrounding environment. What I am trying to represent in *Our Dwelling Place* is another contemporary space and another spatial relationship being created in our time. Yes, most of us who live in the Western world are no longer tied to anthropological places. Yes, all of us spend a fair amount of time in non-places. But there is still a strong passion and desire among persons to be connected to the spaces they live in.

As Clifford pointed out, movement from one location to another has always been part of the basic conditions of human life (1992). The conditions, however, have become intensified in every sense in the contemporary world, which undermines the idea of the anthropological place, or the belief in a naturalised bond between persons and a particular location. Persons in the contemporary world move, permanently in many cases, from the anthropological place. This contemporary condition of social life allowed anthropologists to focus on the phenomenon of de-territorialisation of culture and persons, waking them up from the fantasy of the anthropological place. Yet, those who move from one location have to settle in another. Thus, Gupta and Ferguson highlighted the phenomenon of re-territorialisation (1997). The way these de-territorialised persons re-territorialise themselves can take many forms: recreation of the old environment, assimilation to the new environment, or the refusal to accept that fact and thus remain in transition.

Our Dwelling Place presented and analysed one form of re-territorialisation. The examples discussed in the thesis are highly specific, which can be my contribution to the anthropological study of re-territorialisation. The persons in *Our Dwelling Place* belong to the relatively affluent white middle-class, and chose to move into the localities by their own free will. Their decision to move was an individual not a collective choice. And their movement was a domestic one, or one made within the national boundaries of Britain, which happens to be a 'fringe' area of anthropology, in a peculiar way. This domestic movement, which can be a safer and more predicable action than its trans-national counterpart, is also a common and shared experience among those of us who live in the contemporary Western world. *Our Dwelling Place* intended to consider this rather modest but widely experienced

version of re-territorialisation.

This thesis focused mainly on two desires expressed in such a process: the preoccupation with local historical elements expressed in the form of documentation and the projection of pre-conceived images onto rural spaces realised through the space management system. I interpret these two prominent phenomena I observed in my field as expressions of two desires: the desire to be a part of temporal continuity and the desire to control rural spatial formation. Put another way, the place-making process in my field, or the process of re-territorialisation (not of a culture or a group but of an individual), took place as a process to satisfy these two desires. The satisfaction of the desires created a sense of ownership of the locality, which was experienced in various forms: possession, control, participation and enjoyment. The realisation of these desires was a crucial element in the transformation of the new environment into their 'dwelling place'.

Both these desires and processes have already been exhaustively discussed in the main body of the text and there is little to add to the argument here. However, two more points should be addressed here, at the very end of the thesis. The first point is that these desires expressed by the persons I worked with are not necessarily 'typical' emotions engendered in the process of re-territorialisation. They can be very site-specific desires generated in the contemporary English countryside, which has been closely related to the idea of 'tradition', in its very vague sense, and which has a widely circulated and accepted particular visual spatial image. With a degree of difference, those who moved into the localities studied in this thesis sought, or expected to experience, these elements in the first place. They moved into the localities with particular images and anticipation in their minds. In other words, English rural spaces, which are generically named as 'the countryside', have the potential to produce particular desires, which subsequently engender particular practices among those who have already shared such images.

This influence of particular images, generally known collectively as 'rural idyll', brings us to the second point: the crucial role of the 'story' in the place-making process. De Certeau stressed its importance:

In this [spatial] organization, the story plays a decisive role. It 'describes', to be sure. But 'every

description is more than a fixation,' it is 'a culturally creative act.' It even has distributive power and performative force when an ensemble of circumstances is brought together. Then it founds spaces. Reciprocally, where stories are disappearing (or else are being reduced to museographical objects), there is a loss of space: deprived of narrations, the group or the individual regresses toward the disquieting, fatalistic experience of a formless, indistinct, and nocturnal totality (1984: 123).

He also stated that:

The story's first function is to authorize, or more exactly, to found ... This founding is precisely the primary role of the story. It opens a legitimate theatre for practical actions (op. cit: 123-5).

He suggested that the story provided a framework in which persons could 'act'. In other words, he regarded the place-making process as a dramatisation of space: persons can engage with their surroundings in a meaningful way, or can transform their surroundings into a meaningful space, only when the surroundings are dramatised by the story. The framework or the stage created by the story provides their activity with a certain orientation and perception. It also presents a plot to follow. The story can take many forms: personal, collective, established, emerging, dominant, subversive, forced and manipulated. Many stories can be told in the same space.

The strong passion for the past we observed among the in-migrants in my fields can be explained by this necessity to dramatise of the space. This necessity was strongly influenced by the aforementioned predisposition of the in-migrants of the English countryside to seek 'traditional' elements. The story sought after by the in-migrants there was the one regarding temporal continuity which is assumed to flow through the particular locality. The spatial identity in this case was assured by the temporal continuity presented in the form of a story, or history as its variation to be precise. As a result the place was created and experienced as a spatio-temporal complex. Another passion expressed by the in-migrants was that for controlling the rural space. This passion took a particular form, which was actually the passion for shaping the space into a certain form, which could be the village or a particular kind of farm. They tried to make it close to the ideal forms by (re)creating or preserving certain features. These ideals were all part of the idealised image of rurality known as the rural idyll. The formation of the English rural idyll has already been well examined elsewhere (eg Williams 1973, Newby 1979, Howkins 1986, Bunce 1994)

and I do not have any space to review these studies here, but suffice it to point out here that the idea was first formed in art, including painting and literature and then exploited and proliferated by capitalism through its powerful advertising apparatus in order to add values and authenticity to commercial products and services, and was also capitalised by the state propaganda machine during the two world wars to mobilise people's patriotism. Through these various representational media, persons in Britain and beyond have long been exposed to the idea which determined the nature of the English countryside in a loose way. Having been used and developed in various fields with different intentions, the rural idyll is not a solid coherent story but rather a mixture of various different stories. Some of these stories contest each other, as we have already seen. But depending on their positions and conditions, those who live in the countryside try to realise or enact the story which fits them. In other words, the rural space is physically formed by the stories of the rural idyll.

The consideration of the formation process of a sense of place among in-migrants in an English rural area started to defend their often pejoratively treated activities and lifestyle. I hope this study provides some clues to understanding their passion and desire to be connected to the locality they have chosen. However, their ever-increasing numbers in rural areas, along with their access to various resources, has given these mostly middle-class in-migrants the most powerful voice to determine the nature of the space. As we have seen, the power relationships in rural areas are anything but simple, and vary from locality to locality; most of those who have a vested interest in rural spaces can take the dominant position at one stage but have to take a resisting position at another time. However, generally speaking, with their acquired powerful voice, the middle-class in-migrants have started to shape their space according to the story they prefer, which in some cases denies the other stories projected onto the same space by other persons. Just like their local predecessors, these in-migrated populations in rural areas are racially specific. In the ever-pluralising British society, English rural areas are still predominantly reserved as a space for white people. It is still very rare to see non-white persons in rural areas either as residents or visitors. Various factors contribute to maintaining this state: a

lack of social infrastructures, including employment opportunities, affordable housing, a social support network, political and social conservatism, and perhaps being away from the cultural influence of the rural idyll. Taking these realities into consideration, the challenge these in-migrants are facing today is how to create or maintain their sense of place without being intolerant by denying other persons opportunities to create a sense of place in the same locality.

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